THE EFFECTIVE USE OF HIP-HOP RHETORIC IN 21ST CENTURY PREACHING AND ITS IMPACT ON POST-MODERN MILLENNIALS

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ABSTRACT

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This was an action research project using a qualitative design of phenomenology. The project was conducted at St. Paul Baptist church in Baltimore, Maryland. The purpose of this project was to use Hip-Hop rhetoric to preach prophetically to postmodern millennia's, within an urban context. The hypothesis was that through the preaching and teaching of sermons using specific hip-hop rhetoric; young adults between the ages of eighteen to thirty-five would increase their biblical knowledge, church attendance, and theological appetite. The methodology was triangulated using pre and post surveys, hip-hop infused sermons, group discussions, and selected interviews from the urban post-modern cohort.

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First, I would like to thank God, for without him nothing is possible. I would like to extend my sincerest appreciation and thanks to my dynamic mentors Dr. William H. Curtis and Dr. Gina M. Stewart for modeling what a true scholar and preacher should be. For guiding and mentoring me through this process and for availing themselves mentally, spiritually, and physically through this journey.

To my professional and context associates Dr. Dionne Curbeam, Dr. Earl Nathan Woodard, Min. Carl Hamiel, Reverend Stephen Dickerson, and Dr. Leo White. All of you have helped in providing wisdom and encouragement over these three years. I appreciate your willingness to support this project in so many selfless ways. I would like to extend a special thanks to all of my colleagues who have remained faithful and available throughout this journey. Finally, I would like to acknowledge the students who made themselves available to participate in this project.

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my mother, Velma Early, who has been my number one supporter since I entered this earth. None of this would be possible without your prayers, support, and encouragement throughout the years. To my Father, Mark Johnson Sr., who has supported me and helped to remind me of the genius that lives in me. To my Stepfather, Phillip Early, who has always offered his prayers and words of wisdom during this journey. To my entire Boykins and Johnson families, St. Paul Baptist Church, and my pastor and first lady, Dr. Cleveland C. Alexander and Pauletta Alexander.

INTRODUCTION

Postmodernity presents many challenges for the urban church, one of which, is the missing presence of a generation known as millennials. The absence of this generation can be attributed to a myriad of contributing factors such as, dated doctrine, antiquated worship styles, and just plain rebellion. However, this project examines an alternative preaching approach utilizing a genre of music that has claimed the attention of urban postmodern millennials, Hip-Hop.

In the Psalter we find "Sing unto The Lord a new song" written multiple times which calls for a new way to express and communicate a message to God. This literally is a call for the people of God to be creative in their communication about God. This project is an echo of the Psalmist, calling for clergy to find a new way to communicate to a generation through a nomenclature and culture called Hip Hop.

This work will study a cohort of postmodern millennials who live within an urban context similar to St. Paul Baptist Church in Baltimore, Maryland. This randomly selected cohort will be men and women between the ages of eighteen and forty. They will have an opportunity to experience sermons that are infused with Hip-Hop nomenclature with the hope of increasing a generation's willingness to reconnect with the church.

Chapter one allows me to tell my story and the various watershed moments that serve as pillars in my life that helped my spiritual formation. It will unpack who I am and

how my urban upbringing with Hip-hop, help develop a spiritual imagination that took shape and form within an Urban Church.

Chapter two will examine other scholars and clergy whose ministries and context have utilized and benefited from the use of Hip-hop to convey the message of God. Chapter three examines biblical, historical, and theological foundational works. Chapter four outlines the methodology for a replicable model of ministry. Chapter five analyses the field work accumulated based on testing the model of ministry with program participants. This work culminates with chapter six, a detailed description of the process of engaging the postmodern millennial cohort and the results of my efforts.

CHAPTER ONE

MINISTRY FOCUS

Spiritual Biography

My spiritual development can be documented most accurately and honestly by revisiting the spiritual markers that have served as landmarks and watershed moments. The process of this spiritual development will be unpacked using the following order: 1) spiritual awakening; 2) spiritual challenges; 3) spiritual education; 4) spiritual dichotomy; and 5) spiritual emergence.

Spiritual Awakening

A spiritual awakening began on a summer night in the backyard of our home in east Baltimore. At this point in life, my parents had been married for four year and I was seven years old. While sitting on the back porch with my father, gazing at the sky and talking about how being a leader is better than being a follower. My father insisted that in order to be successful you have to surround yourself with other people who are interested in being successful. Meanwhile, my attention was arrested by a huge saucer like object hovering in the night's sky above their yard. My father immediately told me to ask my mom to retrieve the camera so that they could capture this unidentified flying object. My attempt to impress upon my mother to get the camera failed, as she was preoccupied studying business ethics. Enthused about the sighting, I rushed back outside to witness the event unfold with my father. As the spacecraft begin to ascend from over the

backyard and descend so gracefully into the horizon, my mind began to race about questions concerning existence, creation, the universe, and God. This moment served as a watershed experience that raised curiosity about life beyond my existence.

As a result of this experience, inquiries were made of my parents about matters of faith, life, and what exists in outer space; is there a God? What does God look like? Can God hear us? How do I talk to God? Most of these inquiries went unanswered, which was surprising because my father was a man who seemed to have all the answers. Religion and God were issues that were important in understanding but not in practice. The lack of religious conversation, regular church attendance, and religious family members proved to create a working void. Although, both parents were hard workers and instilled good morals and ethics, their insights were rarely influenced by Bible passages. Both parents were young and ambitious and enjoyed providing opportunities to experience life through traveling and being involved with sports. My mother often served as the team's mom assisting with various administrative tasks to help the team reach certain monetary goals, while my father assisted in fine-tuning my athletic skills and talents. My relationship with my father was vital in my spiritual awakening because he was present during the UFO moment and was my role model. My parent's relationship with one another began to deteriorate when I was nine years old. The household became unstable as my father became very abusive towards my mother. We would spend weeks over other family members houses to escape the rage of my father. This created some tension between my father causing me to lose respect for him as a man.

The tension between my parents caused me to question God's presence during times of trouble. It made me begin to have conversations with God since there was no

other siblings to talk to at night while overhearing my parents argue and fight. In my perplexity I decided too seek God, even though I was unsure about his power. I asked God to remove my father from our home in order to sleep at night and not worry about the safety of my mother. Surprisingly, during the summer preceding my entrance into middle school, my father received a job offer in California that was very lucrative and could benefit the family. My father accepted the position and relocated to California leaving my mother and me in Baltimore to carry on with life as usual. Money was sent home every pay period to sustain the household and he would periodically return to check on home.

My first prayer was answered. At this point, I realized that God is real and God will respond to a sincere plea. However, I did not realize that his answered prayer would serve as both a gift and a curse. My father not being present was only good for the safety of my mother and an opportunity for her to end the marriage all together. When it came to my development as a young man, it was the worst thing that could happen to a Black boy living in Baltimore city. Because of my father's absence, there were struggles to find a suitable role model for to gleam the wisdom that was once provided. Even though, I had a million calling cards and could call him at any time, the nature of the divorce caused my father to distance himself from us. I began to hook school, act out in class, and steal from local markets just to fit in. I was now faced with the task of maturing without a father. Meanwhile, as the divorce neared finalization, my financial climate began to shift from a life where I could acquire the latest clothes, games, and gadgets that money could buy, to a place where eating hot dogs and beans were a delicacy. The house we lived in

for ten years was now being foreclosed on and my mother was forced to work two jobs to make ends meet.

The financial strain, mental frustration, rapid weight loss, and spiritual void positioned my mother to search for an alternative solution. She realized that she could no longer bear it all on her own. Ironically, she turned to the same place that I turned to when asking for my father to be removed from the household, God. My mother began attending worship service regularly at St. Paul Baptist Church where she was married. It was at this point that I was able to witness the power of God manifest in his mother's life, as she moved towards financial freedom and mental liberation. Her renewed faith helped to re-awaken my spiritual consciousness; however it did not have the influence needed to push me into a doctrinal enterprise that would provide guidance and instruction. Like many other teenagers, I would be more impressed if this renewed faith was exhibited by one of my peers. And so it was, my closest friend at the time, Robert Hayes, who was the only child in a strict Christian family. God made provisions. Robert lived eight houses apart allowing us to frequently played sports together. Since my mother was working late nights and weekends, she inquired if Robert's mother (Ms. Gloria) could watch me on some weekends. Mrs. Hayes accepted the offer under one condition, that Mark attended church with them on Sunday mornings. For me this appeared to just be another opportunity to hangout with a good friend but the experience at church would prove to being a life-changing encounter. I began attending the First Baptist Church of Baltimore, Maryland at the age of eleven years old. I would be present at least two Sundays a month. During my visitations to the church, I rarely sat in the sanctuary for instruction; most of the time was spent learning the Bible through a Sunday school model. This model taught

about hell, heaven, salvation, and sanctification. All of which were topics that created a dynamic frontier for my spiritual awakening. The information that was provided during these Sunday school sessions, culminated when I witnessed my closest friend Robert undergoing the ordinance of baptism. Watching this experience was so mystical and miraculous. I internalized the effects of the water and how it might impact Robert's life forever; for the better.

It was this encounter with the divine through Robert's conversion and baptism that had the largest impact on my spiritual awakening as it caused me to ponder the next step in life. I wondered about where I would spend eternity. I wrestled with the reality of death. I knew that if I continued a life of crime or violence that I might ultimately have to reckon with God for all of my actions. I wanted a Savior and ended up getting the Lord too.

As a result of Robert's baptism experience, the next opportunity that I worshiped at St. Paul Baptist Church, I decided to become a candidate for baptism. I was twelve at the time and being baptized was not understood an endeavor that enters one into a sanctifying and sacrificial lifestyle but rather, an insurance policy. Nonetheless, I went through the ordinance and remember thinking on that day I would be a new creature, and indestructible. For me, this meant that I was in good hands even if I died. This made me fearless but also more God conscious. After being baptized, I attended Sunday school at St. Paul's church, where I learned more about Christianity. This education lay dormant until tragedy struck and I experienced the death of three loved ones. I suffered three deaths of potential familial male role models, my grandfather, uncle, and only male cousin within the same year. Death has a way of making one more aware of there own

mortality. My uncle was an entrepreneur who owned one of the few black owned corner stores in east Baltimore, a stand at the local flea market, and a clothing store in the historic Old Town mall who suddenly took sick and died. My grandfather was a diabetic and suffered from kidney failure. My cousin Lamont was the death that impacted me the most as he was a kingpin drug dealer and a role model tome because of his abundance of money and respect throughout the city. Lamont was violently killed by a gunshot wound on the eve of his 21st birthday. I remember not being allowed to enter the hospital room to watch him suffer till he took his last breath. This experience helped to re-awaken my spirit. The information that once lay dormant was instantly retrieved in order to deal with my wild emotional rollercoaster. I began to pray more, inquire about righteous living, and researching the scriptures for guidance about manhood. I decided to finish my middle school career strong and pay attention to the words of the preacher a little closer. This encounter with death placed me in a position of wanting more answers from the divine. This made me inquisitive to search more rigorously during the sermonic presentation. From this point on I began to rediscover life and the nuances of one's spiritual existence and its impact on secular affairs. I continued to grow in my understanding of this new awakening and struggled daily with the new reality.

Spiritual Challenges

This new reality presented some challenges for me. At the age of thirteen, I became a popular kid who has been accepted into one of Baltimore's most prestigious high schools. I began to balance my new spiritual reality alongside my popularity. My popularity emerged out of family ties with local drug dealers, relationships with local elite athletes, and a middle school reputation of bullying. The combination of these

dynamic relationships, friendships, and fellowships created a conglomerate that only God could assist in balancing.

The first order of business upon entering high school was academics. I always understood that academics were important and played an integral part in my future. I excelled in mathematics and science and performed to standard in other courses. Being well aware that part of my popularity was attributed to being intelligent and a class clown simultaneously, I would always be picking fun with the cutest females, or bad dressers, making persons who were less popular feel very small and insignificant. I always had a crowd of friends who participated as my live audience throughout the day. I was well-liked by many and well dis-liked by many more. Eventually, this caught up with me during my junior year. During my junior year just before Halloween, my body began to break out in hives on my face, mouth, and arms. I was ashamed to go to school and be seen with all the sores. I cried often because the doctor's could not diagnose his ailment. My mother forced me to go to school after staying home for a few days for fear of my academics declining. This was dreadful; the first week back at school I was forced to be quiet as a mouse, attempting to avoid people for fear of them serving me the ridicule that I had served others so many times before. I ate lunch by myself, sat in the front of the class, and caught the first bus home from school. This was a life-changing event that lasted all but a week but to me it felt like a lifetime. At his wits end, I opened the Bible and read the psalmist asking God to incline his ear to hear the cries of his people. This spoke to me in a simple yet, profound manner. This passage screamed to me, that God is waiting to hear my cry. Immediately, I began to pray frantically to God for intervening and healing. I pleaded with God and made promises to be kind to people, consider their

feelings, and treat everybody like they are somebody. That same night as I would later find out, when I went to bed, my mother prayed over me and anointed me with oil. The next morning when I arose to go to school, all of the swelling and sores had vanished. This was not just another physical healing this was an intrapersonal transformation. This transformation served as a behavioral shift in my demeanor and character. I was no longer boisterous and full of insensitive jokes. This experience positioned me into a posture for being spiritually educated.

Spiritual Education

After God's miracle, I began to read God's word daily and study its precepts. My self-studying began to enlarge my scope of understanding about God's power and ability to have intimate relationships with His creation. The remainder of high school was drastically different than how they began. I became a lot more discipline with my speech, and I began to exhibit more compassion toward my friends as well as my neighbor's property that I had often vandalized. My mother, peers, and teachers began to witness a change in my behavior and it was well accepted. In fact, one of the youth advisors in church witnessed this new zeal and suggested that I represent the church in a guys and dolls pageant where he could display his gifts and talents. I agreed to participate but shortly after became nervous. I was faced with displaying a talent that was used since elementary school, where I played the main role in a play as Noble Drew Ali, ironic to say the least. Nevertheless, I decided to write a speech about how youth and adults should bridge the age gap to further the kingdom of God. In this speech, I used old school church cliché's and hip hop lyrics from Jay-z, Nas, and Tupac to show the value in both generations. On the day of the speech I was nervous but once the speaking moment

presented itself, all anxiety fled. The speech was well received but I do not remember delivering it. It was as if I had an outer-body experience where I was used as a vessel to deliver a message. The message was so moving that the pastor of the church pulled me aside afterwards and said you are going to be a powerful preacher. My response was nonchalant at best, as if the older preacher was out of his wits and was mistaking him for somebody else. The only thing on m mind was hitting the club the following night.

However, after this experience, a new seed had been planted in my psyche that would germinate shortly after. Once I began to focus more on academics and preparing myself for college, I also focused more during Sunday worship, particularly the sermon presentation. I began to take mental notes of the philosophical nuances his pastor would spotlight, the extravagant vocabulary used, and the impact it had on the persons who were receiving the message. Not only did I pay more attention to sermonic presentation, I also developed a close relationship with the pastor. I would engage the pastor in discussion following the 8:00 A.M. service and would attend the 11:00 A.M. worship just to hear how the same sermon would offer new and fresh insight. My pastor made a profound impact on my theological blueprint as he helped to carve out the significance of vocabulary and rhetorical scheme. I also became more attentive in Sunday school. The combination of the two provided me with the right amount of fertilization that would prove to insulate my ministerial curiosity.

Spiritual Dichotomy

This spiritual educatory environment alongside my experiential significance provided a framework for a spiritual dichotomy. I was in a high school Sunday school class with mostly young men and a sprinkle of young women whom were all under

impressed with the information that was being disseminated. This puzzled me because I believed that the information that was being offered was important, but the delivery style of the teacher hindered the message. Often times I would find myself remixing the content in language and/or vernacular that was more palatable for my peers. It was these experiences that provided a mental window for me to flirt with the idea of teaching the young people and mentoring young men in the church. However, this idea would lay dormant as I entered college and entertained a personal career interest as an engineer.

I entered Morgan State University in 2003 and enrolled into the engineering program. During my first year of study, I worked as a nighttime janitor, cleaning the same classrooms and restrooms I used as a student during the day. This provided little time for me to focus on my studies and less time entertaining my infatuation with teaching and perhaps mentoring young males. However, one of my duties was to empty the trashcans of the various departments that were housed in Holmes Hall. While performing my daily routine I would enter the philosophy department everyday to empty trashcans but would feel a sense of fulfillment. It was the strangest thing because I had never taken a philosophy course.

Nevertheless, I eventually stopped working as a janitor and got employed by a local Home Depot and during the second semester of my sophomore year decided to start a mentoring group called Boys to Men. This program created an opportunity for me to help young men without father figures. The program was therapeutic for me, being able to interpret my fatherless struggle through scripture and provide direction for other young men like me. It was within this enterprise that I was provided with a framework that would help shape an emerging dichotomy between my academic pursuits and my

undeniable call. In other words, what I was passionate about conflicted with what I was studying at the institution. This wore on me as I found myself less interested in electrical engineering and as a result my grades started to drop. I spent less time studying calculus and more time figuring out the nuances of Corinthians. My growing infatuation with finding creative ways to articulate the complicated religious rhetoric to a generation of un-churched young men was consuming my mental space. In light of my new zeal for philosophy, religion, and rhetoric, I decided to change my major from electrical engineering to philosophy and religious studies. When I entered into my junior year, I walked into the same office I cleaned and it was as if I was where God wanted me to be.

From that moment on I began to study about the inventors of mathematics, philosophical inquiries that lead to science, and a non-traditional understanding of religion. This is what I needed to better teach and mentor young men. I started teaching gang members, drug dealers, and conservative teenagers about St. Augustine of Northern Africa through the lyrics of Jay-z and utilizing Nas to bring to life the voice of Jeremiah. To this end I was sold on the idea that I wanted to teach people about their faith as a career. My infatuation with being able to inspire, inform, and ignite people who would otherwise be uninterested had become my life's desire.

Upon graduation, my advisor, Dr. Joe Pettit, persuaded me to apply to an Ivy League Masters of Divinity program in pursuit of a Ph.D. in theology. He argued that this would be a sure way of covering all avenues as it relates to the academy and ministry. I had no intentions on preaching the gospel only teaching. God made his plan clearer to me as I visited Duke University for their M.Div. program. While sitting in the airport in Durham, North Carolina a voice spoke clearly to me saying, "teach and preach my

word." After hearing this voice, it became crystal clear that God was not only preparing me to teach but to preach as well. This revelation positioned me to not only study in the academy but also preach in the pulpit. This helped position me for spiritual emergence.

Spiritual Emergence

After graduating from Morgan in 2008, I decided not to attend an Ivy League institution. Instead, I enrolled in Howard University School of Divinity, a program that would provide an African backdrop of religious history and theological discourse. Howard University fined tuned my theological muscle, added mass to my historical foundation, and helped me understand the importance of social justice attachment to the gospels. My scope of religious accommodation developed. My appreciation for classical philosophy and African philosophy grew. While enrolled, I preached my initial sermon entitled, "What's Love Got to Do with it?" I always understood the importance of balancing culture and Christ and as a result, utilized melodic rhetoric to articulate Christological truths. As I matriculated at Howard, I assumed multiple ministerial roles at St. Paul Baptist church, including Young Adult Pastor.

Currently, my spiritual journey has led me to becoming the president of the youth and young adult department of the Maryland Progressive Baptist Convention. I have continued to serve as an itinerate minister preaching throughout the nation. More recently I am in pursuit of my Doctor of Ministry degree at United Theological Seminary in Dayton, Ohio.

Contextual Analysis

The Coldstream-Homestead-Montebello community is bounded by Harford Road on the east; Loch Raven Boulevard on the west; 25th Street on the south; and 32nd and 33rd

Streets on the north. The community takes its name from three early nineteenth century estates. The neighborhood captures in name the nineteenth century grandeur of Baltimore's elaborate summer estates. Homestead was built by Thomas Gorsuch around 1731. The estate lasted until 1851 when Robert Gorsuch Jr. subdivided the estate into the village of Homestead. Coldstream, built around 1793 by the Dulany family, was for its time an extravagant country estate.

In 1805 William Patterson bought the estate, which stayed in the Patterson family until the 1920s. During its heyday from 1805 to 1835, the family entertained their friends with strawberry parties, accompanied by champagne, and followed by dancing on the lawn. Landscaping of the property was remarkable. French architect and sculpturer, A. Chevalier designed Coldstream's entrance gateway and a garden statue. In addition, Patterson landscaped the stream running through his property into a series of falling pools, much like Homeland of today. By 1850, the property was being used for other purposes than a summer home. It was first used as a boarding school and by the twentieth century, it was a boarding house. In 1918 the last Patterson related to the site died and was buried in the family plot on the estate. Shortly thereafter, the building was demolished and row houses were built.

By far, Montebello was the most exquisite country estate that comprised the neighborhood. Montebello had not one but two nationally prominent owners: General Samuel Smith and John Garrett. Between 1796-1800 General Samuel Smith acquired 473 acres directly across the street from Clifton Park and began building Montebello. Smith's summer estate grew to become a highly landscaped estate with several outbuildings including slave quarters, stables, ice houses, root cellar, etc. The estate stayed in the

Smith Family until 1842 when it was sold to the Tiffany family. The neighborhood of antebellum Coldstream-Homestead-Montebello was different than its late-nineteenth century manifestation. In 1852, Robert Gorsuch Jr. subdivided his ancestor's estate and laid out a suburban village, one of the first in Baltimore. Gorsuch's endeavor to build a suburban community crept along at a snail's pace. In the first twelve years or so only a dozen buildings were built. It was not until the Hall's Springs Railway was built that the village began to increase in size. By 1881, Thomas Scharf in his history of Baltimore City and County summarily described the village:

> Homestead is the farthest east of the cluster of villages [in the 9th district of Baltimore County], and binds upon the Harford road. As far back as 1852 a movement was made for the establishment of a suburban village here. There was then no railway communication; however, and the project failed. In 1866 it was revived and became a success. Homestead is charmingly located within a few moment's walk of Lake Clifton, the estate of Horace Abbott, that of the late Thomas Kelso, and President Garrett's "Montebello." It is reached by the Hall's Springs line of horse railway.

In 1871, John Work Garrett bought the former Montebello estate and cobbled its 473 acres to the Archibald Stirling's estate, *Snowdon.* By the time he was done acquiring land, he had created the largest private estate in Baltimore City; Garrett's holdings were more than 1400 acres.

Montebello had Baltimore's largest private racing stable, a private racecourse, two historic mansions, a conservatory, and several other buildings. By adding Garrett's 1400 acres to Johns Hopkins 500 acres (now Clifton Park) with several other land holdings, Homestead was surrounded by well landscaped open space. This sense of open space provided Homestead with one of its most valuable assets.

By the end of the nineteenth century, Homestead was a village laid out on three east/west streets approximately three blocks long. The village was built of a mixture of

detached houses, duplexes, and row houses with architectural styles of the Victorian Period.

20th Century History

Twentieth Century changed Homestead from a Country village to a row house community. Unlike the planned suburbs such as Roland Park and Sudbrook Park, most suburban areas were a constantly changing environment made up of the old, new and a sense of becoming. Dozens of players made hundreds of decisions that changed the neighborhood from a rural to urban landscape. These separate decisions are captured in the myriad of building types and architecture. The upper part of Coldstream-Homestead-Montebello is a coherent grouping of row houses. To the south of Montpelier there is another row house grouping of approximately eight blocks of row houses.

By 1923, the comprehensive zoning ordinance declared Homestead to be a row house community. Prior to this zoning declaration, row house developers were building hundreds of houses. Shortly thereafter, large-scale row house developer E. J. Gallagher built porch front housing with front yards. Between 1906 and 1914 approximately twenty-five rows of row housing were built, most of which clustered near Harford Road. Between 1914 and 1936 approximately one hundred rows of row housing were built. Other significant features of the neighborhood, which proved to enhance the neighborhood, include The Alameda, which was laid out as part of the Olmsted plan of 1904. The Alameda was designed to connect Thirty-Third Street to Clifton Park; more so, it was designed as a formal approach to Clifton Park and as an extension of Clifton Park into the neighborhood. Baltimore City College, the Castle on the Hill, opened in 1928 lending to the neighborhood green space and an architectural gem. Also, Lake

Montebello, built 1881, is another asset that provides open space and recreational opportunities.

Population

The population map showed the change of population in the CHM community from 1990–2000. The population map showed that there was an increase in population within the 1400-1500 block of Carswell Street and Gorsuch Avenue. However, overall in the community there was a 2.3% or more decrease in population. There were areas in the community that had experienced a 1% to 11% decrease in population. Most of these areas of minimal decrease in population are located on parkland, and institutional or commercial property.

Diversity

The Coldstream Homestead Montebello (CHM) community's population is predominately African American. According to the 2010 Census data, 96.5% of the residents in CHM are African American, 1.25% Caucasian, .6% Asian, and .1% Other. Thirty percent of youth in CHM are age 18 and under, the percentage of elderly in the community is 11% over age 64, and the average number of persons per household is 2.14.

Income

According to the 2010 census the majority household income for the community was $20,000 – $40,000 per year. A small portion of the community (located in the Homestead area) make below $20,000 dollars per year. There are some areas immediately outside of the community's boundary to the north that make up to 60,000

per year, while other nearby neighboring communities to the south and west have similar income amounts as CHM.

The Coldstream Homestead Montebello (CHM) community is in transition. In recent years, the neighborhood has experienced the same disinvestment that affects many older urban neighborhoods. Over the last several decades there has been a substantial loss of population, a growing trend of abandonment, and a growth of deterioration and blight among the most vulnerable within the community. The decline has not been limited to the residential market; the commercial areas often do not meet the needs of the residents and do not present the best face of the community. Within this trend have risen too many incidents of crime against people and property. These trends, although not pervasive, are persistent and have affected the quality and the perception of life in the community. The trends that contribute to these negative perceptions must be halted and reversed if CHM is to sustain itself as a viable urban community.

Ministry Context

The context more specifically, is the St. Paul Baptist Church, which is located at 3101 The Alameda. The church sits at the center of the CHM community. St. Paul Baptist is a 102-year-old church that has a rich legacy within east Baltimore. It has had approximately eight pastors, all of which were classically educated at accredited colleges and universities. The congregation of about 800 members is made up of middle/working class professionals who have been college educated. There is a good combination of lawyers, public officials, teachers, principles, and engineers.

The demographics of the church do reflect the community in which it is situated. It is about 97% African American and the balance is comprised of a mixture of white and

Native Americans. The church is about 85% female and 15% male. Most of the core and active membership are over the age of fifty-five. The youth and young adult departments have about twenty active participants in programs and only five are young adults. Young adults make up less that 1% of the total churches population. The majority of the youth who are active are also female.

The church currently has thirteen associate ministers, out of which six are female. In fact one of the proud traditions of the church s that it is one of the first traditional Black Baptist churches who allowed woman in the pulpit under Dr. George A Crawley Jr. The congregation has been a hallmark of the CHM community since the late 70's where it continues to be a center for social justice. The church provides clothes and food for those in need on a weekly basis. They have a vibrant substance abuse program and do a number of outreach services throughout the course of the year. One of the well-attended events is the Thanksgiving dinner, where the church serves over 500 people who are currently residents of shelters throughout the city and state of Maryland.

The St. Paul Baptist church is the context out of which this project seeks to use as the base for the research project.

Synergy

The synergy of my spiritual biography and contextual analysis creates a cross pollination that bleeds a few realities. The spiritual biography documents the spiritual pillars, which emerge out of watershed moments. These watershed moments have informed, shaped, and matured my faith journey. In particular, my spiritual awakening, spiritual challenges, and spiritual education raise important questions about his development. My neighborhoods ills, being raised by a single parent, and religious

skepticism have all contributed to the deficits that led him to a new spiritual emergence. The contextual analysis provides a backdrop that is painted with a church (St. Paul Baptist Church) and community that is in need of a spiritual awakening and emergence. The community's socio-economic challenges have also contributed to the apathy towards religious rhetoric. The contextual analysis suggests that as the prevalence of single parent households grew, so did the have proven to be a communal and religious challenges. As a result many youth, particularly African American males, are coerced into the attractive life of drug trafficking and abuse. This particular group is also represented amongst the youth of the church. Therefore, it is natural for this document to clarify these challenges in hopes to provide a problem statement, which can assist in clarifying a plausible action research project. This synergy will focus on three areas of cross-pollination: (1) Urban environment; (2) Single Parent Household; and (3) Religious skepticism.

Urban Environment

Both the context and me reside within geographical environments that are parallel. Both the church and me are within predominantly Black neighborhoods that have a mixture of middle and low class residents. The local convenience stores were stocked with high sugar and sodium products. Drug dealers consumed space directly in front of the stores that created fear and safety depending on ones familiarity with the dealers. This is significant as it speaks to the criminal element within the community. Often you would see that individuals who were drug dealers were the grandchildren of at least 50% of the members at the church. According to an additional survey, 93% of all members had persons who sold or are still selling drugs in their immediate family.

The environment is also filled with two prominent high schools and a

Historically Black University, which provides an influx of youth and young adults who are, on the surface at least, educated. Both groups of young people whether dealer or student, are products of similar environments. I attended the Baltimore City College High School, which is a premier school for liberal arts. The school has produces multiple politician including governors, mayors, and writers. The urban environment serves as an incubator for persons who are diligent to a path of destruction or success.

Furthermore, the majority of the community is largely impacted by Hip Hop music and culture. The latest trends in fashion and music are always on display whether it is on Sunday morning as youth trickle into Sunday school or on a Friday night as persons get prepared to go party. It is evident in the vernacular and language you hear as person's converse about day-to-day issues and concerns. The rhetoric that is used within urban Black culture has largely been defined by the lyrical content and sub-culture of hip-hop. The context that the church is located is not exempt from the impact of this sub-culture. In fact it is in the center of the culture and its influence is presenting a great challenge for the traditional approach to ministry. The church is very much engulfed in the tradition of Baptist dogma and I am a hybrid product of its traditional climate. I am a hybrid because I too am a product of the hip-hop subculture. Mark was raised during the climax of its popularity and born during its resurrection to mainstream media during the mid 80's. This synergy proves that a work that can potentially assist clergy and ministries in closing the gam between the hip-hop generation and current rhetorical methods/methodology.

Religious Skepticism

Religious skepticism theoretically is a vibrant part of any healthy or unhealthy church. The skepticism that persists throughout my spiritual journey became the driving

force behind my matriculation as a man and as a proclaimer of God's word. The skepticism that existed from the UFO experience proved to be a powerful spiritual marker that would manifest itself in my spiritual awakening and travers the religious worlds waters for probable cause not merely resolution.

Religious skepticism is what made preaching provocative. My pastor was the perfect proclaimer to foster and incubate my philosophical approach. He preached sermons that often times did not end with a solution or resolution but rather, it would end with questions, solemn appeals, and provocative statements.

The church is a harbor for closet religious skeptics. However, one's piety is often celebrated when one is able to completely obliterate any inclination of that suspicion. Hip Hop fuels the suspicion within the urban society. Hip hop became the urban informer. It exclaimed that "911 was a joke in your town", it expressed a disdain for corrupt police when NWA rapped, "Fuck the Police." These were attitudes that were housed in the hearts and psyches of many minorities living in urban environments. After the civil rights era, the fight for justice was no longer fought through the lyrics of artist. The social commentators of liberation moved from Cornel West to Kanye West. The eloquent speech of orators of the past, were becoming less effective because of their seemingly perceived thirst for recognition instead of revolution.

I was highly influenced by this pop culture and remember questioning my mother about Gods involvement with the common affairs of people. I was skeptical of moral objective truth. I was skeptical to the point where I would ask difficult questions during Sunday school and Bible study that would frustrate my teachers. I would have theological debates with my pastor after a sermon to determine if the proponents of his message

rested in the foundation of his pastor's personal convictions or if it was a regurgitation of prominent white theologians. To my surprise, it only exposed my pastor's lack of certainty in the theory's of men and his willingness to wrestle with that uncertainty until he arrives at a clearer but maybe not concrete conclusion.

The religious skepticism was and is in fact, prevalent during my generation and even more of the generation immediately following. The difference is in persons between sixteen to thirty who are faced with the same conundrums but, do not have adequate access to clergy who can help guide them through the maze of religious uncertainty. Therefore, hip hop became a familiar, non-judgmental, and seemingly safe environment to help replace religious skepticism with a rhythmic rhetorical social philosophy; a rhetorical method, which prescribes how one should maneuver and navigate life for people who live on the margins.

Therefore, a project that bleeds from this synergy ought to address the urban environment as well as the religious skepticism that exist. A project that should assist clergy in better articulating the biblical narrative and the gospel truth to a generation of post modern thinkers. Thinkers who are more familiar with hip hop rhetoric that theological jargon. A hybrid proclamation reformation that uses the means, while preserving the message, and calling the generation to a prophetic assignment to be a part of the Jesus revolution.

CHAPTER TWO

STATE OF THE ART IN THIS MINISTRY MODEL

Many urban churches find themselves in generational chaos. With the assistance of ideologies and methodologies such as, spatial de-concentration and gentrification, communities have been divided in more ways than just housing. Specifically, the Black community has suffered division in geographical location, cultural identity, and spiritual engagement, and civic responsibility. This is not to suggest that the Black community was historically a homogenous spiritual community however; over time it has become more divided as it relates to moral standards, and moral responsibility. Moreover, one of the assumed pundits of this communal debauching is none other than the genre of music known as hip-hop. While the hip-hop genre has been labeled as one of the culprits for the absence of urban post-moderns, maybe hip-hop could be the vehicle that transports an absent generation back to church. However, the questions that urban churches have concerning the absence of urban post-moderns are not easily answered, but they can be investigated by considering a few guided questions about hip-hop and Christianity: 1) Where does it emerge; 2) Why is hip-hop so attractive; and 3) Should it be used as a vehicle for Christianity?

Dr. Alton B. Pollard III, Dean of Howard University School of Divinity, asserts that hip-hop emerges from the corridors and deep connection between the civil rights movement and of the soul generation. Pollard says,

> From civil rights to Hip Hop—these are the two great cornerstones of the modern African American freedom movement: Civil rights laid the groundwork for the transformation of society. Hip Hop now has the opportunity to reinvent the future of the United States and the world and take us there.[1]

Pollard shares the same views as noted author and scholar Patricia Hill Collins, that the emergence of hip hop find its roots and assumes its identity from the unfinished work of the Civil Rights movement and the post-soul embodiment. Collins, states in her book *From Black Power to Hip Hop*, the following:

> In the United States, the paradoxical beliefs expressed by African American members of this group reflect the contradictions of a new racism. Coming to adulthood after the decline of civil rights and black power movements of the 1950's and 1960's, contemporary black youth grew up during a period for initial promise, profound change, and, for far too many heart-wrenching disappointment. During this period marked by the end of the Black Power Movement and the ascendancy of hip hop, they lived the shift from color-conscious racism that relied on strict racial segregation to a seemingly colorblind racism that promised equal opportunities yet provided no lasting avenues for African American advancement… The lives of poor and working class Black youth who symbolize the contradictions of this new racism are especially telling. Ironically, this is a generation whose members remain written off, marginalized, and largely invisible in everyday life.[2]

Collins helps to clarify that the social realities of hip hop's inception proves that its initial political, spiritual, and social consciousness is shaped by poverty and no crystallization of a hope which were mined in the minds of Black urban youth. It is also critical to understand that the akin to the civil rights movement, hip-hop can be represented into non-violent and violent approaches to the ills of urban life. Hip-hop not only emerges from the civil rights movement it also evolved to become the premier neo-civil rights movement of post moderns.

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[1]David Kinnaman and Gabe Lyons, *unChristian: What a New Generation Really Thinks About Christianity and Why It Really Matters 2007* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2007).

[2]Patricia Hill Collins, *From Black Power to Hip Hop* (Philadelphia PA: Temple University Press, 2006), 2.

Mark Anthony Neal, Professor of Black Popular Culture in the Department of Afgrican and Arican American Studies at Duke University, argues that Hip-Hop continues the fight for social justice. In an article published in 2011 he says:

> More than twenty years ago, on the evening of March 2, 1991, motorist Rodney King was stopped by LAPD officers for speeding. King's subsequent beating was videotaped by passerby George Holiday and quickly became the most famous evidence of police brutality, though the four officers who were charged with brutality were later acquitted of charges. The Rodney King beating was digital confirmation of what many Blacks experienced in relationship to law enforcement in the 1980s and early 1990s, whether exemplified by the choking death of graffiti artist Michael Stewart, the shooting of the elderly Eleanor Bumpurs and of course the beating of King.
>
> In an era marked by the increased presence of law enforcement in Black communities—a by-product of buy and bust forms of policing, that fed the expansion of the prison industrial complex—young Black men were particularly susceptible to blatant forms of police brutality. As such, so-called "gangsta rap "--in spite of its problematic narratives with regards to gender, sexuality, and violence—was likely the most organic documentation of police brutality in Black communities. As political scientist Lester Spence notes in his book Stare in the Darkness: The Limits of Hip-Hop and Black Politics, he was "hard pressed to find a single song that was uncritical of the police." The Rodney King beating highlighted, the power and importance of counter-surveillance of law enforcement in this country—a value that was instilled within the Black body politic twenty-five years before the Rodney King beating, by the Black Panther Party.
>
> To be sure The Black Panther Party (for Self-Defense), with founders the late Huey P. Newton and Bobby Seale, were not the first individuals within Black communities to attempt to hold law enforcement accountable, but at the height of the Civil Rights/Black Power Movement the Black Panther Party became the most visible proponents of the power of policing the police. As Alondra Nelson notes in her new book Body and Soul: The Black Panther Party and the Fight Against Medical Discrimination, the Black Panther Party was founded on the premise of "afford[ing] protection for poor blacks from police brutality." In its earliest incarnation in late 1966, armed Black Panther Party members oversaw police activities in Black communities from a distance allowable by law. The Mulford Act, which outlawed loaded guns in public, was passed by the California State legislature a year later, in direct response to the activism of the Black Panther Party.
>
> Twenty years later, Hip-Hop culture reanimated this particular activist thread, lyrically reporting on the nature of unfairness of the judicial system and the abuse of power by law enforcement. Yet even in that mode, Hip-Hop narratives seemed to lend itself to visual sensibilities and the coming digital revolution. In his book In Search of The Black Fantastic: Politics & Popular Culture in the Post-Civil Rights Era, political scientist Richard Iton observes that

> Black Popular Culture became "suddenly, particularly, and violently public...a development that led to a range of gatekeeping responses from those committed to restricting the circulation of certain kinds of information within black communities and maintaining 'order'." According to Iton, this heightened visibility and "policing" was coupled with the "proliferation of hand-held and surveillance video cameras, camera phones, and the awareness of these new technologies," creating the "internalization of the expectation that one is always potentially being watched."[3]

Hip hop's 40 year old legacy has evolved over the past twenty years and a discussion about where hip hop emerges does not assist this work unless we come to understand what hip hop is now and its implications on the church. While we can make the argument that the church and hip-hop has been at odds with one another in this current age, it is the premise of some scholars who believe that now is the time for the two to join forces.

Alton B. Pollard argues this well in the foreword of *The Hip-Hop Church: Connecting with the movement shaping our culture,* where he says:

> The same divine presence that was at work forty years ago is no less evident today in hip-hop music and culture. Regrettably, not everyone agrees with the assessment. Now more than ever, the great divides of race, gender, sexuality, and class seem to fall along the fault line of intergenerational misgivings and distrust. This is the most certainly true for American of African descent. All too often the civil rights generation is ready to decry the amnesia and irresponsibility of the hip-hop generation. With equal eloquence and defiance, the hip-hop generation trumpets the death of all civil rights sensibilities. Somewhere between these oppositional truths lies the much-needed recognition that we as people are only as strong as our weakest link. Simply stated, we need each other.
>
> Civil rights is black America's sacred legacy. Hip-hop is this era's sacred hope. A number of social realities define the world of hip-hop generation, from globalization and resegregation in the public sphere to deradicalization and commercialization in the churches. Despite what some have said, today's young people are no less spiritual than their predecessors, but they live in a time when the loss of faith in social institutions—no less religious ones---is understandable and epidemic. Many hip-hop heads speak truth to power saying, "I'm spiritual but

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[3]Mark Anthony, Neal, "Who Got the Camera?": Hip Hop's Quest for Social Justice." *Black Voices Pop Culture*, December 20, 2011: 1-4.

> I'm not religious." Theirs is the passionate quest for something deeper and more authentic than what often passes for religion.
>
> If the Black church would serve the present age it requires a great commitment to social struggle and a deeper dedication to its own. Questionable theology, dubious politics, hierarchical practices, excessive materialism, and an utter captivity to custom are the hallmark of many black churches in the twenty first century. Hip-hop had to be born because, among other reasons, the black church was no longer being faithful to its own calling.
>
> The Black church and hip-hop are the two greatest repositories of our culture. Flawed messengers convey right and exacting messages in both. Flawed adherents immerse themselves fully in the experiences of both. The time is right for the two to be joined where coexistence is possible and betrayal is not to be had.[4]

Pollard makes it clear for us where Hip-Hop currently is but the question, "Why should it be used as a vehicle?" still remains. Pollard alludes to this fact but, Efrem Smith and Phil Jackson elaborate on this notion further in their book The Hip-Hop Church:

> Now, I realize that urban culture includes ethnicities beyond the African American ethnic group and many subcultures beyond hip-hop. But the broader culture we live in is larger than postmodernism too, and my point here is to connect postmodernism to urban culture in order to broaden and diversify the discussions I've witnessed over the past couple of years around culture, Christianity and the church. I'm concerned that those participating in and influencing discussions, events, and books centered on the church and culture tend to be predominantly white and male. They also almost always take place outside the setting of the inner city, despite the fact that white teens especially outside the city tend to be influenced by inner-city culture. Church youth, regardless of ethnicity are influenced by hip-hop"[5]

The Barna Group[6] discovered in their research that there were a number of reasons why post-moderns leave their church or decide to disconnect from church all together. One of their findings was:

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[4]Efrem Smith and Phil Jackson, *The Hip-Hop Church: Connecting With The Movement Shaping Culture.* (Madison, WI: InterVarsity Press, 2005), Forward.

[5]Ibid.

[6]Barna Group, *Barna: Millenials.* September 28, 2011, accessed January 24, 2012, www.barna.org.

> A second reason that young people depart church as young adults is that something is lacking in their experience of church. One-third said "church is boring" (31%). One-quarter of these young adults said that "faith is not relevant to my career or interests" (24%) or that "the Bible is not taught clearly or often enough" (23%). Sadly, one-fifth of these young adults who attended a church as a teenager said, "God seems missing from my experience of church" (20%).

Therefore, teens and twentysomethings cannot connect with a shallow experience of Christianity.[7] One of the things that Hip-hop prides itself on is keeping it real, therefore, making it a premiere candidate as a means of experiencing and pronouncing the gospel. In fact, David Kinnman suggests the urgency of connecting with this post-modern generation in his book entitled, *unChristian* where he states:

> The problem of young adults dropping out of church life is particularly urgent because most churches work best for 'traditional' young adults – those whose life journeys and life questions are normal and conventional. But most young adults no longer follow the typical path of leaving home, getting an education, finding a job, getting married and having kids—all before the age of 30. These life events are being delayed, reordered, and sometimes pushed completely off the radar among today's young adults. Consequently, churches are not prepared to handle the 'new normal.

In light of the disconnect between the church and a post-modern generation that is highly influenced by hip hop culture and the urgency of a bridge, hip-hop is one of this generations best hopes for reconnecting with the church. The following quote explains best why clergy need to use hip-hop rhetoric to preach the prophetic message of the gospel of Jesus Christ:

> The church embracing and engaging hip-hop culture in the end is really not about music but about a generation of young people. The key is that hip hop culture is the soil many young people (especially those who are urban) are growing in. having a love for hip-hop is not the major issue, the issue is what the church is willing to do because of its love for the hip hop generation.
>
> God loved the world so much that he invaded it in the form of the Son, Jesus Christ. Jesus came into the world, that people would be healed, delivered, taught, set free and would live eternally with the heavenly Father. What great

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[7]David Kinnaman and Aly Hawkins, *You Lost Me: Why Young Adults Are Leaving Churches...Rethinking Faith* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2011).

lengths the Father took because of his love for us! What length is the church today willing to go for young people? Many youth and young adults living in hip-hop are in need of healing, freedom, empowerment, and the salvation that comes through Jesus Christ. This time it's the church God is choosing to use for the invasion. I hope you allow God to use your ministry in a revolutionary and biblical way.[8]

[8]Smith and Jackson, *The Hip-Hop Church*.

CHAPTER THREE

THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS

Biblical Foundation

The biblical foundation of this work is a process of a hermeneutic, which focuses on one Old Testament text, Psalm 33:1-5 and New Testament text, Galatians 2:7-8 which is attributed to Paul.

The exposition of the Old Testament text seeks to prove God's sovereignty and approval of using new means of transporting the same message. The exegetical process for the New Testament text will entail three components for each text: 1) The social context of the writer; 2) The Focal pericope; and 3) The focal text.

New Testament

The Social Context

Paul's Galatians account is a passionate appeal for intercommunion. This work is a continuation of the table-fellowship for which Paul fought at Antioch. The task confronting Paul is the painful theological and ecclesial prejudices that are being practice on Gentiles. It is a complete conundrum where Paul is unable to conceive the possibilities of two Christian groups in one place who refuse to eat with each other because gentiles are not compelled to becoming Jewish to be a disciple of Jesus. Like Paul's other writings, the social context is not much different in that there is a recognition and

admittance that it is possible for the Church of God to be one without being uniform in custom, habit, or sphere1

Galatians is Paul's response to the pressure that emerged from Peter's gospel, which asserts; in order to be true Christians one must also adopt and recognize the Torah and traditions of Judaism. Paul is arguing that the diversity within the Church of God is good and necessary for the continued growth of the Kingdom of God on earth. Paul is writing to the churches he founded in Galatia to remind them that aligning oneself with the traditions of Judaism is a perversion of the gospel. In Paul's view, the opponents taught a number of things that Paul vehemently objected such as, circumcision as symbol of allegiance to Christ, dependence on works of the law, and ritual observance of the Jewish calendar to name a few. This task is insulated by a culture that Christianity is on the rise and having the authentic brand is essential to being apart of this new community. Paul uses this letter to reaffirm the gospel to persons who are not born into Judaism. Here, he creates the clear distinction that the gospel does not have different messages but the presentation should be sensitive to the audience in which it is presented. The social context creates an essential backdrop for the focal periscope of this foundation.

Focal Pericope

Galatians 2 begins with Paul's Jerusalem conference experience. This conference included James, Cephas and John. The goal of the conference was to decide the future direction of the Christian mission. The main issue was circumcision (2:3,7,9). Circumcision is the surgical removal of the foreskin of the penis, a religious rite practiced by Jews on the eighth day after a boy's birth. It is still practiced by Jews today and is a

[1]R. A. Cole, The Epistle of Paul to the Galatians: An Introduction and Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub., 1965), 12.

joyous celebration called Brist. In Genesis 17:11-12, God commanded Abraham to institute the practice as a sign of everlasting covenant with the people. According to Earl Johnson Jr., originally circumcision may have been started to ward off evil, or possibly health reasons. However, Israel saw it as a spiritual act, which showed the closeness of God to the chosen people.

This becomes a major issue for the early church because most of the early Christians were Jews, just as Jesus was Jewish; therefore, assuming that all Christians would follow Jewish practices as part of there new faith. Paul and others saw the matter differently. Paul's main constituents and converts were non-Jewish who never adopted the customs. Paul's refusal to circumcise Titus (2:3) was what blew his gasket because even though the Jerusalem conference agreed with Paul's point of view, there missionaries were still attempting to force people into Judaism traditions and customs. Paul's work was under attack by missionaries who echoed the message of Peter.

As a result, Paul decided to measure the gospel that he preached up against the gospel that the apostles in Jerusalem were preaching. It was not for validation, but rather it was to show that the message and purpose were congruent. He found that the gospel message was preserved in both presentations, however he also discovered that anything presented that forced Judaic tradition or customs onto the new convert was in fact a false gospel. The false gospel for Paul (according to 2:4) is probably those Jewish-Christian believers from Jerusalem who came to Galatians churches to get Galatians to adhere to Jewish practices. This focal pericope provides this biblical foundation a textured canvas to expound on this work's focal passage.

Focal Passage: 2:7-8

This focal passage is centered on Paul's problem of three different approaches to Christian ministry. The first approach is characterized by the work of Peter, and his mission to the circumcised. Paul and the gospel to the uncircumcised characterize the second approach. The third approach is characterized by those false proclaimers, whose message to the Gentiles was to become Jewish.

Paul was clear that the first ministry was conducted amongst Jews and once they became Christians they were permitted or perhaps required to practice and observe the Jewish custom. That was not Paul's gripe or dilemma. The second gospel ministry was Paul's model. His mission was toward the Gentiles who had never observed such practices and customers and they were not asked or required to do so when they became Christians. The third group believed that the Gentiles also had to observe all of the Jewish rites to be Christian believers.

Under contemporary and post modern consideration, the first group in the text represents persons who have a religious imagination that is shaped by past religious devotion and a culture that embarrassed the tenants of Christian doctrine, dogma, and practice. This group would be considered the circumcised. This group can be prophetically preached to using religious nomenclature due to their familiarity and social connectivity. The second group however, is not familiar with the monotheistic religious framework; they do not have a religious lineage that connects there past religious expressions to Christianity. The second group is that of the uncircumcised. This group must be presented the gospel using nomenclature, rhetoric, and familiar metaphors that will be able to connect and identify them with the gospel message.

This focal passage reveals to the reader that the message needs to be placed in a framework and context that the audience can identify in order to reach them where they are. Paul is suggesting that one's style does not discount the message; he is arguing that prophets of the gospel need to utilize the best method to reach those who are lost. This text makes it clear that all prophets do not have the same audience and certain people are sent to minister to particular populations.

Ultimately, this text paints a vivid picture for persons who are interested in preaching to postmodern generation. That is, preaching that is not bogged down with religious jargon. The postmodern generation is in need of the gospel, but perhaps preachers should adopt what is familiar in order to reach people who are unfamiliar to the gospel message of Jesus Christ. However, for the larger work at hand, the second approach used by Paul is the method that is plausible.

The social context of Galatians is culturally complex, economically stratified, and religiously skeptical. The community was culturally complex because it housed both Jews and Gentiles, both of which are constantly competing to have superiority over the other. The world in which Paul lived held a high regard for the spoken word. Those who could manipulate words expertly rose to the top. To be known as an excellent speaker gave one great social prestige. However, some members of the Church at Corinth felt deeply saddened because Paul did not measure up to their expectations as a religious proclaimer (2 Cor 10:10). For Boykin Sanders, the Corinthian congregation represents a cross-section of Roman society preoccupied with upward mobility. Scholars hold that the Corinthian boasts about social connections and devotion to patronage sponsors. For certain scholars the terms weak and strong reflect sociopolitical stratifications among

members of the Corinthian church. Weak categorized persons who were at the bottom of the socioeconomic pecking order, and strong refers to those whose higher socioeconomic standing reflects the interests and the habits of the bourgeoisie. Paul is viewed as railing against the strong not only because of their misdirected energies and interest, but also because of their disregard for the concerns and needs of those in the lower ranks.[2]

Some suggest that 1 Corinthians reveals an economically well-off Paul who willfully engages in self-deprecation, refusing financial support and engaging in manual labor. Some also view Paul as the master rhetorician, who uses various rhetorical strategies—judicial, parliamentary, and praise-and-blame rhetoric to redirect Corinthians toward nobler ends, and as a chauvinist who undermines freedom and possibilities of women prophets.

The view that other scholars offer is more plausible for the ends of this foundation and hermeneutic. That is, Paul was not well-off, and not as concerned with the economically deprived. This is not to suggest that poor people were not important, just not as important as spread the gospel. Paul's theology, ethics, and mission were predicated on his preaching.

Historical Foundation

> Today, Postmodernity says: All you can believe is what's in your heart, count on intuition and faith, give up on the idea of truth, have an experience instead.
>
> Johnston

The shift in Western thinking toward post-modernity is by far one of the quietest revolutions to take place with perhaps the most powerful impact. As one enters into the year 2013, it is almost incomprehensible what the current generation and, generations to

[2]Sanders, 2007.

come will understand about religion and spirituality. According to a recent data posted Cnn.com, one out of five people in America are religiously unaffiliated but maintain their belief in God. Which suggest that persons are becoming increasingly unwilling to commit to any particular religious tradition that serves as a tag for who they are in relation to their creator. One might attribute this fact to the proliferation of individualism and commercialism with hopes of passing the buck on to persons who to are religiously exhausted with the fact-sheet overload of irrelevant religious piety and sacred ceremony. Others might argue that the Christian religion is merely an American social past time and its sole purpose is to help maintain a superficial connection to our ancestors. Then there are those who argue that the moral decay is a product of a culture that have created and embraced new art forms of expression (i.e. music, dance, cinema).

Nonetheless, as clergy and prophetic proclaimer, this is the social location one is positioned to bring the message of Christ to a world that is increasingly detaching itself from any resemblance of a body of believers.

This epidemic, and task leads this work back to other periods of cultural shifts, that caused Christianity to change the address which the message of Christ is being delivered and to argue that we most certainly need to modify the mode of transportation. This historical foundation will engage three watershed cultural shifts, which led to proclamation reformation and conclude that a new modification of proclamation needs to be utilized for a new generation: 1) Early modern Protestant Reformation; 2) Modern era or Enlightenment; and 3) Early Post Modern era. Each of these cultural shifts document a significant change in the rhetoric employed for prophetic proclamation. In order to accurately change to the right rhetoric, one ought to consider a pure source from which

clergy can draw to understand the culture. The purest source to determine the pulse of the culture is the popular music genre of its' time.

The early modern-era might be classified and categorized by many events, catastrophic wars, tyranny, and bloody land battles. However no single event was as impactful as the protestant reformation. The protestant reformation of the 16th century was not only a religious reformation but it was a cultural reformation as well. This movement started with religion because Christianity established the cultural norms. This movement, like others, began with a revolutionary invention, the printing press, and a revolutionist named Martin Luther.

The printing press was the dawn of mass publication and communication, which made concepts, ideas, and new theories available for the public. Having the new printing centers available in Germany provided free thinkers with ample ammunition to reach the masses with potent new theories about religion, culture, and living conditions. The single most prominent figure of this Christian shift is Martin Luther. Luther was indeed a figure who was well worth the accolades, but this work seeks to look at the things that drove him.

In many circles, Luther's work has been reduced to a fundamental biblical interpretation difference between himself (and a host of other priest, laymen, and pew members) and the Catholic Church. However, Luther's foundational and principle components of his prophetic proclamation is not primarily informed by religious rhetoric, but by secular music and culture. Luther did not just engage himself in biblical exegesis; he did cultural exegesis as well. In particular, Luther as a choral composer provides clarity as to how he used music from the people to minster to the people. According to

Luther, "Next to the Word of God, the noble art of music is the greatest treasure in the world."[3]

For Luther, music was a means through which persons encounter an experience with God. These experiences were fundamental and paramount to the growth of the church. This reality that was so clear for Luther was very blurry to the Catholic Church were he served. For the church, the traditional hymns and sermonic presentations were sufficient. This tension grew and would prove to be one of the more compelling influences that pushed Luther to his rebellion. We see Luther's frustration as well as his genius in the Chorales he created. We see his frustration in his radical approach to how worship music should be arranged.

According to Foley, Luther made music from the people for the people. This process enabled Luther to utilize the current folk tunes and lace them with scriptural paraphrases that took worship to another level. For all intensive purposes, Luther was the original spiritual DJ, mixing fresh lyrics over old beats. It was this innovation that caused friction between Luther and the elders of the church. This work contends that this innovation of music and proclamation fueled the reformer's passion to push the envelope on other issues concerning the ecclesial and theological praxis of the time. In fact, the genius in Luther's music provides the perfect transition into his reformed preaching and prophetic edge. The music that Luther composed shows that he was open to the idea of utilizing the tools of his present age in order to further the kingdom agenda. In fact, this wok will now prove this notion by examining Luther's prophetic sermons. The following

[3]Walter Buszin in "Luther on Music" Musical Quarterly 32 (1946).

quote was taken from his Church Postil where he preached a prophetic sermon about the way Christians should live between two kingdoms.

> So, too, Christians are subjects of two kingdoms—they have experience of two kinds of life. Here on earth where the world has its home and its heavenly kingdom, we surely are not citizens. According to Paul (Phil 3, 20), "our conversation"—our citizenship—"is with Christ in heaven"; that is, in yonder life, the life we await. As the Jews hoped to be released from Babylon, we hope to be released from this present life and to go where we shall be lordly citizens forever. But being obliged to continue in this wretched state—our Babylon—so long as God wills, we should do as the Jews were commanded to do—mingle with other mortals, eat and drink, make homes, till the soil, fill civil offices and show good will toward our fellows, even praying for them, until the hour arrives for us to depart unto our home.[4]

The genius of this new form of worshipful expression and proclamation was that it also enabled Luther to derive a fresh perspective of how Christians perceived their place in the world. The definition of the religious life was one that separated the righteous and the unrighteous, and Luther is arguing that we need to be mingled with those who we perceive as being wicked. In fact, he infers that Jesus is the perfect model of this mingling.

Luther's prophetic utterances help in providing the necessary motif that bridges the sacred and the profane in ways that are still profitable to the kingdom of God. In fact, the following excerpt are the closing remarks of the same sermon where he sums up for the hearer should embrace the society where God has placed them. Luther says:

> In short, a Christian must be one who, as Paul says (1 Cor 7, 29-31), uses this world as not abusing it, who buys and possesses as though he possessed not, who has wife and children as though he had them not and who builds as though not building. How is it possible to reconcile these seeming inconsistencies? By making the Christian faith distinct from the faith of the Jews and Turks--yes, of the Papists even: by accepting the fact that the Christian's attitude toward this earthly life is the attitude of the guest; that in such capacity is he to build, to buy, to have dealings and hold intercourse with his fellows, to join them in all temporal

[4]Martin Luther, and Timothy F. Lull, *Martin Luther's Basic Theological Writings* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1989).

> affairs--a guest who respects his host's wishes, the laws of the realm and of the city and the customs of the inn, but at the same time the Christian refrains from attesting his satisfaction with this life as if he intended to remain here and hoped for nothing better. Thus will the Christian pass through every temporal event in the right way--having every possession as though not having it, using and yet not cleaving to it; not so occupied with the temporal as to lose the eternal, but leaving behind--forgetting--the former while striving after the latter as the goal set before him. Therefore, they who presume to run out of the world by going into the desert or the wilderness; who, unwilling to occupy the inn but finding it indispensable nevertheless, must become their own hosts--these are great and unreasonable fools. Surely they must eat and drink and have clothing and shelter. With these things they cannot dispense, even if they can withdraw from all society. Nor is their action forsaking and fleeing the world, as they imagine it to be. Whatever your station and condition, whatever your occupation in life, of necessity you must be somewhere on earth while mortal life is yours. Nor has God separated you from men; he has placed you in society. Each individual is created and born for the sake of other individuals. But observe, wherever you are and whatever your station, you are, I say, to flee the world.[5]

Here, Luther is clear with his position of the relationship between the world and Christians. It is evident the he is vehemently against any notion that suggest that Christians are to be separated or live in isolation from the world and society they are placed.

Furthermore, this negotiates the writer's perspective that historically, one must engage the culture to effectively be prophetic. In the case of Luther, he used culture to influence his music, which helped inform his theological interpretation of the Bible, and more importantly it helped him shape a prophetic message that people could identify with in terms of there everyday reality. Luther is the first of three examples that this work has called upon to show that historically, music has provided social commentary that can inform Christianity of what ways the message of Christ needs to be communicated to be prophetic and effective.

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[5]Ibid.

The second era that is essential to this historical framework is the modern era or the enlightenment period. This era is being used as an antithetical example to show how Christianity shifted with the influence of science and reason. According to a New York Times article, "The Enlightenment was a period in history when fanciful thinking gave way to a more rational understanding of cause and effect. It promoted the scientific method; challenged ideas grounded in tradition, faith, or superstition, and advocated the restructuring of governments and social institutions based on reason. (It was not always so enlightened, however. While Enlightenment thinkers sought to advance the public good producing documents like The Bill of Rights they also used reason to justify colonialism and slavery.)"[6] This age where reason and faith were seemingly at odds is responsible for developing the framework for a movement known as The Great awakening.

This movement, similar to the protestant reformation, can also hang on the hinges of one prominent family and the prophetic proclamation witnesses, in the persons of Charles and John Wesley and George Whitfield. Charles Wesley provides for this work the relationship between secular music and culture with the sacred scriptures of the church. John Wesley provides for us the relationship between reason and faith where he uses the cultural shift to develop a denomination of Christianity known as Methodism. Whitfield uses his charismatic sermonic presentation to communicate the message unlike anyone else of his time.

Methodism is a bi-product of the enlightenment era and it is a direct response to the cultural climate. In Europe and America, writes historian Christine Heyrman, "A new

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[6]Bornstein 2012

Age of Faith rose to counter the currents of the Age of Enlightenment, to reaffirm the view that being truly religious meant trusting the heart rather than the head, prizing feeling more than thinking, and relying on biblical revelation rather than human reason." In particular, America was in the process of establishing its own identity, and Christianity was still the premier religion amongst the second generation British Americans.

The increased religious activity provided John and Charles Wesley, and David Whitfield with the perfect storm for religious men of their caliber. Charles and John Wesley had already developed Methodism in England and John was the forerunner who brought it to the shores of America. Whitfield was a pivotal catalyst for the spreading of Methodist's. This section wishes to focus on the sermons of Whitfield that are the hallmarks of the first great awakening which ultimately change the religious landscape in America for centuries to come.

George Whitefield was born in Gloucester, England in 1714. In 1738 he traveled to Georgia, the first of seven trips to America. In 1739, after a year-long return to London where he was ordained as a minister in the Church of England, Whitefield traveled to Philadelphia. His popularity when he left the city was so great that his farewell sermon had to be moved to an open field in order to accommodate the enormous crowd. 30,000 people reportedly attended a sermon in Boston, which was more than the entire population of the city at the time. Whitefield was known for his lively and dramatic preaching. According to historian Harry S. Stout, "He was not acting as he preached so much as he was exhibiting a one-to-one correspondence between his inner passions and the biblical saints he embodied."[7] In his sermons, Whitefield spoke out against

[7]Harry S. Stout, The Divine Dramatist: George Whitefield and the Rise of Modern Evangelicalism (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 1991).

established churches, encouraging colonists to seek a revived form of Puritanism that did not require institutional churches. He also preached about the spirituality of American slaves, encouraging slave owners to acknowledge their slaves' spiritual freedom. He traveled throughout the colonies, from Georgia to New England, winning admirers and adherents, including Benjamin Franklin. After delivering over 18,000 sermons in his lifetime, Whitefield died in 1770 in Newburyport, Massachusetts.

However before dying there is one sermon that calls for our reflection entitled, "The Great Duty of Family Religion." This sermon shows how Whitfield's style of street ministry gave him insight to talk about the fabric of the family. The sermon is a reflection of Joshua 24:15 "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." After the brief introduction Whitfield sheds light on the reality of the family:

> It is true indeed, visit our churches, and you may perhaps see something of the form of godliness still subsisting amongst us; but even that is scarcely to be met with in private houses. So that were the blessed angels to come, as in the patriarchal age, and observe our spiritual economy [meaning not in dictionary, but ecumenical=ecumenical, so economy may be same as economy] at home, would they not be tempted to say as Abraham to Abimilech, "Surely, the fear of God is not in this place? (Gen 20:11).[8]

Here we see that Whitfield uses his insight to challenge the fabric of the family structure and more importantly to summons the fathers to take their positions as generals. Later on in the same sermon we see the Whitfield breaking down the necessity of training up future generations to preserve this lifestyle of separate from the world and its way:

> But it is time for me to hasten to the third and last means I shall recommend, whereby every governor ought with his household to serve the Lord, CATECHIZING AND INSTRUCTING their children and servants, and bringing them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. I am aware but of one objection, that can, with any show of reason, be urged against what has been advanced; which is, that such a procedure as this will take up too much time, and

[8]Whitfield, 2009.

> hinder families too long from their worldly business. But it is much to be questioned, whether persons that start such an abjection, are not of the same hypocritical spirit as the traitor Judas, who had indignation against devout Mary, for being so profuse of her ointment, in anointing our blessed Lord, and asked why it might not be sold for two hundred pence, and given to the poor. For has God given us so much time to work for ourselves, and shall we not allow some small pittance of it, morning and evening, to be devoted to his more immediate worship and service? Have not people read, that it is God who gives men power to get wealth, and therefore that the best way to prosper in the world, is to secure his favor? And has not our blessed Lord himself promised, that if we seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, all outward necessaries shall be added unto us?
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> Abraham, no doubt, was a man of as great business as such objectors may be; but yet he would find time to command his household to serve the Lord. Nay, David was a king, and consequently had a great deal of business upon his hands; yet notwithstanding, he professes that he would walk in his house with a perfect heart. And, to instance but one more, holy Joshua was a person certainly engaged very much in temporal affairs; and yet he solemnly declares before all Israel, that as for him and his household, they would serve the Lord. And did persons but redeem their time, as Abraham, David, or Joshua did, they would no longer complain, that family duties kept them too long from the business of the world.[9]

Whitfield calls families to not allow the progression of the age to neglect the essentials of training ones family about the morals that produces prosperity in the first place. He reminds them that God is the one who prospers those in God's own divine time. This message of strength, hope, and vigor proves that Whitfield used the social commentary to paint a vivid picture of reality and it provides his sermons with a texture that called people and a nation to revive their spiritual selves in the wake of scientific and rational proliferation. It was exactly what the people of America needed in order to distinguish her identity.

The third era of this foundational work is that of the early Post-modern era which can be defined as the time period of the 20th century. During the era there is one figure that embodies best, the core of what this foundation work seeks to prove, that is, to

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[9]Ibid.

historically prove that clergy must embrace the social commentary offered through cultural norms (i.e. music, arts, cinema) in order to prophetically minister effectively. That figure is the Reverend Clarence LaVaughn Franklin, known as C. L. Franklin.

C. L. Franklin was born in rural Mississippi in the early in the twentieth century, a Black child who grew up in a land dominated by white men and the white cotton they grew. C. L. Franklin became in time one of Black America's most renowned preachers.[10] His sermons, compelling original presentations within a deeply familiar preaching tradition, offered new ways of considering the interplay of religious belief, racial identity, and social activism in daily life.[11] His musical tastes ranged from sacred to secular, which reflects his belief that all music was God's creation. His passion for music and affinity for culture provided Franklin with the proper tools to be prophetic to a struggling multigenerational Afro-America who were in search of meaning of American democracy. The following quote documents his impact:

> Clarence LaVaughn Franklin was deeply involved in these developments. His sermons, seventy-five of which were recorded live and sold nationally, provided pointed social and political analyses that consciously urged others to discover their voices and to engage the world about them. His Detroit home, moreover, was a crossroads for post-World War II black musical culture. The great jazz and blues artists, gospel singers, rhythm and blues performers, and the enormously talented Detroit youngsters who would so influence popular music mingled at the gatherings he hosted. All of this constituted Franklin's world.[12]

Similar to Luther, Franklin mingled with secular culture and he benefited from the innovations of the time. For Luther the innovation was the printing press. For Franklin

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[10]Nick Salvatore, Singing in a Strange Land: C. L. Franklin, the Black Church, and the Transformation of America (New York, NY: Little, Brown, 2005).

[11]Ibid.

[12]Ibid.

the innovation was the invention of the phonograph. The innovations of the age provided the outlet necessary for the spreading of the prophetic message. The phonograph was invented in the late 1800's but its popularity was the result of the demand to hear gospel, Blues, and jazz music. Salvatore in this subsequent quote documents the impact the phonograph had on the black community:

> Between 1914 and 1919, for example, the three companies that manufactured phonographs had increased their sales nationally almost 500 percent. Releases of blues songs and gospel hymns, primarily sold in black America, likewise grew spectacularly during the 1920s, from fifty records in 1921 to some five hundred six years later. Total record sales of gospel and blues, known in the industry as "race records," topped 10 million in 1927, the equal of the approximate number of blacks in the entire nation. Just as impressive was the growth of recorded sermons. In 1926 only six preachers recorded for commercial labels, although one sold almost 90,000 copies of a single sermon, and religious records far outsold both blues and jazz.[13]

This explosive growth of the recording industry during the 1920's enabled families to explore and enjoy a variety of music. Families were now being exposed to the blues motif and becoming more aware that the struggles of Black folk were common throughout the country. This also created a climate where preaching was constantly vibrating in the household. The Franklins were one of those families with a phonograph and they had records to play on it.

> We had religious records, we had blues records." Clarence specifically recalled gospel recordings and sides by Texas bluesman Blind Lemon Jefferson, St. Louis's Roosevelt Sykes, and the Delta's Tommy Johnson and Charley Patton. He also remembered playing the records of J. M. Gates, especially his famous "Dead Cat on the Line," a sermon that addressed sexual infidelity and paternity. Like Cleo Myles, he probably did not dance at this point in his life, but he rejected even then the idea that sacred and secular music was in conflict. "Not within me," he later asserted. "I always liked the blues." There were, at St. Peter's Rock, "some church people who didn't approve it, blues, but they didn't understand that it was part of their cultural heritage. This "cultural heritage" was a thick gumbo of

[13]Ibid.

> musical and spoken words that conveyed both an ethical dimension and, often, a social commentary as well.[14]

Ultimately, C. L. Franklin effectively used the music of his generation to prophetically preach to the modern mind. The music shaped his social commentary, it helped him to develop a more effective communication style, and it solidified him as a social critic.

Therefore, considering the implications of the research on the three pivotal cultural shifts, it is the writer's summation that preachers of post-modernity will have to follow a similar path. That is, they must mingle with the culture and utilize the social commentary, nomenclature, and cultural norms it avails.

Theological Foundation

Christian theology can be pursued in a plethora of contexts however; it has a special relationship to the life of a proclaimer. The life of the proclaimer must wrestle with the questions of theology, in order to define the tasks of theology. The questions of theology emerge out of the branches of theology: 1) biblical theology; 2) historical theology; 3) philosophical theology; and 4) practical theology. Biblical theology studies the canonical writings of the old and new testaments that the church acknowledges as the primary witness to the work of God. Historical theology documents the journey of the Christian faith and life in various durations and spaces. Philosophical theology utilizes the tools of philosophical inquiry to examine truths of the Christian faith. Practical theology explores the meaning and integrity of the basic practices of the church and the specific task of ministry such as preaching and teaching. The questions and tasks that emerge out of these branches are all worthy of discourse however, this work will spend its time arrested by the questions and tasks which draw from practical theology's well. In

[14]Ibid.

particular, this work will address the themes that involve the proclamation aspect of Practical theology, that is, to capture and maintain the focus of the larger work at hand. There are four critical questions that the preaching component of Practical theology seeks to answer:

1. Are the proclamations faithful to the gospel message revealed through Jesus Christ?
2. Are the proclamations faithful to the tradition attested and agreed upon in scripture?
3. Does the proclamation represent the God of Jesus Christ as a living reality in the present context?
4. Does the proclamation lead to transforming practice in personal and social life?

James Cone says, "Theological concepts have meaning only as they are translated into theological praxis, that is, the Church living in the world on the basis of what it proclaims" Therefore, the tasks that emerges from these four questions create the backdrop as to why the proposed project is necessary. The tasks that need to be tackled are: Pneumatology, Theological pedagogy, Christology, and kerygma. Pneumatology is a necessary task because, a proclamation that remains faithful to the gospel message revealed to Jesus Christ is one that has allows the Holy Spirit to illuminate the revelation. Theological pedagogy is a necessary task because it provides the insight on the proper usage and interpretation of history, experience, and doctrine. Christology is an imperative task because the Jesus of history was the living proclamation of the gospel message. The task of kerygma helps in defining the method and means through which the message is received.

These tasks of theology seek to provide perspective as to how theology is critical to this unique tapestry of the larger theological work.

Pneumatology

The doctrine of the Holy Spirit is almost always the culprit of any charismatic movement within Christian history. The Holy Spirit is a vital component in the life of Christians and serves as the engine of the church. "God is Spirit" (Jn 4:24). But what does that tell us about God? The Hebrew word ruach, can be translated into English as spirit but still have a range of associated meanings. There are at least three words that English uses to differentiate the range of meanings wind, breath, and spirit. All of which connotes distinct characteristic or model of the Holy Spirit.

According to McGrath, the writers of the Old Testament are careful not to identify God with the wind. They are strategic to not reduce God to the level of natural force. However, they do draw parallel between the power of the wind and the power of God. This is made evident in the book of Exodus, where God uses the energy of the "Lord of Hosts" to bring freedom to Israel after being held captive to Egypt. As Israel is attempting to escape they run into a the red sea, and according to Exodus 14:21 there was a powerful wind that divides the red sea enabling them to cross over into safety. Here, the idea of ruach conveys the redemptive power and purpose of God.

The idea of spirit is also associated with life. When God created Adam, God breathed into him the breath of life and, as a result Adam became a living being (Gn 2:7). The fundamental difference between a living and a dead being is that the former breathes

and the latter does not.[15] Therefore life is dependent upon breath. God is the one who breathes the breath of life into empty shells and bring them into real existence. A common example of this reality can also be seen in the valley of dry bones (Ez 37:1-4). The pivotal question is can these dry bones live? The bones only come to life when the breath enters into them (Ez 36:9-10). It is thus important to note that ruach is inseparable from God's work of creation, even if the role of the spirit is unspecified.

The technical term charism refers to the filling of the holy spirit with an individual, by which the person in question is enabled to perform task which otherwise would be impossible. Some scholars suggest that the gift of wisdom is in contention with the endowment of the spirit. However, the most pervasive feature of this aspect of the Spirit relates to prophecy. The activities of the prophets were associated with the message of the prophecy rather than the behavior of the prophet. What validated the prophet's credentials was the endowment with the spirit, which authenticates the prophet's message, a message that described the dabhar (The Word of the Lord).[16]

All three meanings offer a rich backdrop and help in creating a landscape with palatable points of departure. For this work, the point of departure will be from the in-dwelling spirit definition offered, charism. This rendering is the perfect point of departure and arrival as this work seeks to argue that other forms of vernacular, nomenclature, and rhetoric can be used, as long as the inspiration is from the charism. In the following sections, this work seeks to prove that the functions of the spirit can remain in tact, as the method used to convey its spirit-led prophetic message evolves.

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[15]Alister E McGrath, *The Christian Theology Reader* (Oxford, UK: Blackwell, 1995), 308.

[16]Ibid., 309.

What does the Holy Spirit do? This question involves three traditional responses; 1) Reveals the truths of God; 2) Works in saving the people of God; and 3) Guide the people of God in sanctified living. All of which serves as the primary functions of the Holy Spirit. Revelation, salvation, and the Christian life are the essential functions of the Holy Spirit.

Revelation

There has been much scholarship that supports the notion that the Spirit is possibly the most pivotal figure in the trinity as it relates to making God known to humanity. The indwelling of the Spirit continues to reveal God and God's will to humanity since Jesus' exit from earth. In fact, Martin Bucer argues that revelation cannot occur without the assistance of God's spirit.[17]

> Before we believe in God and are inspired by the Holy Spirit, we are unspiritual and for that reason we are completely unable to apprehend anything relating to God. So all the wisdom and righteousness which we possess in the absence of the Holy Spirit are the darkness and shadow of death.

Therefore, the task of the Holy Spirit is to lead people into God's truth; without that Spirit, truth remains elusive. This work is imperative for Christianity's primary literary source, the scriptures. The Holy Scriptures is Holy because the Holy Spirit is the culprit of all its authors. In fact, the Holy Spirit is what differentiates sacred scripture from stories about God.

Salvation

Throughout the history of Christianity the divinity of the Holy Spirit has often been called into question. From the council of Constantinople in 381 A.D. where theologians decided to equivocate the Holy Spirit with God without explicitly stating the

[17]Ibid., 312.

obvious to Augustine who defined the Spirit as the Bond of Love. All of which have enabled generations to understand the work of the Spirit as part and parcel with the work of God. That is, the Holy Spirit is just as powerful and necessary as God the father and God the Son.

That being noted, the Holy Spirit functions through the work of salvation through the process of sanctification. Sanctification is the process that makes humanity more divine. The divinization process is only made possible through charism the inner workings of the Holy Spirit. Salvation is virtually impossible if salvation is understood as a relational concept as oppose, to an ontological one that's adopted by most eastern orthodox traditions. Nevertheless, the Holy Spirit is what establishes the salvific work between Christ and believer.

The Christian Life

The Holy Spirit's role to the Christian is critical to both the individual and corporate life. According to Cyril of Alexandria, the Holy Spirit is essential to unifying the church. He says, "Just as the power of the holy flesh of Christ united those in whom dwells into one body, I think that, in much the same way, the one and undivided Spirit of God, who dwells in us all, leads us all into spiritual unity."

Scholars also suggest that the Holy Spirit also functions in the life of the Christian in two other common ways. One way is the making real" of God in personal and corporate worship and the other is enabling the believer to live a morally sound Christian life. Therefore, pneumatology under rhetorical consideration offers an array of unique possibilities for how one ought to perceive the sermonic interruption, the telling of the

story, and the crashing-in of Christ. This aspect of theological foundation has investigated and established the framework for spirit-led prophetic messages.

Theological Pedagogy

Theological pedagogy is a necessary task for this work in that it helps to establish some groundwork for how persons come into the knowledge of God. There is an embedded epistemology within the Christian tradition that emerges out of scripture, liturgy, and praxis. There are three fundamental questions surrounding this embedded epistemology:

1. What is knowledge?
2. How is knowledge acquired?
3. To what extent is it possible for a given subject to be known?

Theological pedagogy attempts to answer the second question in order to provide the larger work with a frame of reference as to how hip-hop rhetoric can be used in order to teach Christian principles, dogma, and doctrine correctly. This section will provide the texture of the greater tapestry, that is, ensuring that hip-hop rhetoric accurately educates non-believers about God. More specifically, this section will examine Old Testament pedagogy, New Testament pedagogy, and the process of spiritual exegesis. After examining the three forms of theological pedagogy, the writer will adopt a hybrid method of the three.

Old Testament

In the Old Testament, the knowledge of God comes primarily through personal relationship with God. The knowledge of God is not independent of theoretical

knowledge, however it does suggest that only through experience does one come to know God relationally and holistically.[18]

According to Ryan O'Dowd, there are two important and interrelated observations about knowledge of God in Ancient Israel. One details the epistemology and the other details pedagogy. The epistemological observation is that Israel's knowledge of God is wedded to the ongoing redemption that God exhibits throughout the Pentateuch, while Deuteronomy positions the knowledge upon living in the continuation of that redemption through obedience to the Torah. Thus making the epistemology of Deuteronomy assimilative and participatory. Assimilative because Israel knows God through it's story of redemption, which can only be assimilated if one participates in being obedient to Torah.

The pedagogical observation is that Israel's knowledge is also performative. Reading, hearing, writing, singing, remembering and obeying the Torah actualize the ontological realities of Israel relationship with Yahweh.[19] In short, Alexander Schmemann sums up this idea when he writes, "The leitouregia of ancient Israel was the corporate work of a few to prepare the world for the coming of the messiah. And in this act of preparation they became what they were called to be, the Israel of God, the chosen instrument of His purpose."[20]

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[18]Natasha Vall, *Cultural Region: North East England 1945-2000* (Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 2011), 30-31.

[19]O'Dowd, 20.

[20]Schmemann, 25.

New Testament

New testament pedagogy is rooted with the assumptions from Old Testament epistemology, that is, the coming of the messiah. This ideal only becomes a reality with the incarnation of Christ. This Christological fulfillment perhaps satisfied the Old Testament prophecy but it also created a completely new means of communication with Yahweh. According to the gospel of John, the incarnate Word fulfills Israel's role in God's will and mediating the knowledge and redemptive blessings of God to the nations. According to Mary Healy, there is a Christological fulfillment of old testament epistemology in the Pauline corpus. Shevv suggests that knowledge of God is mediated by Christ, the teacher, as God offers a "definitive communication of himself through the person and life of Jesus Christ," the central event in the biblical story and the event which sheds light on, not only God's redemptive plan, but also his nature and character.

Both Old and New Testaments offer sure foundations for biblical theological pedagogy and simultaneously creating a springboard for another model of theological pedagogy that utilizes "four senses." The four senses were first written of by, the prominent African theologian from Hippo, Augustine. Augustine in his De Genesi as litteram references the three senses that were used by Gregory the Great, (literal, allegorical, and tropological) and expands them by adding the analogical. According to Lubac, "The letter teaches us what took place, the allegory what to believe, the moral what to do, the analogy what to strive for."

The literal sense is the foundation upon which all the other senses are based. The literal aspect of this model is suggesting that exegetes respect the letter. That is, all interpreters should remain true to the person and witness of Jesus Christ during exegesis.

The literal sense within theological pedagogy is therefore and enterprise by which the task is to take care of the author's original Christological and moral interpretations. Dawson summarizes the literal sense well, "Christianity demands respect for the letter of the spirit, respect for the grammar of difference that constitute identity."

The allegorical sense serves as the deepening agent for the literal sense. It takes the literal sense and enables the transformation of the Jesus of history. The allegorical sense helps point to the fullness of Christ and the purpose of the church. Lubac argues that the allegorical sense also enable the Church to continually interpret reality from a Christological perspective.

With the third sense, the tropological, a person comes to know himself with his misery and his sin while getting to know the perfection for which God destines and calls him." The tropological is the moral agent that reveals the drama of the Church's historical existence as well as the drama of every individual's interior life." This is done through the liturgy, doctrins, and dogma within the church. The typological unlocks the ecclesiological meaning of scripture and assists and enabling the individual to apply it to their lives. Tropological cannot be understood individually only within a corporate situation due to its social interpretive nature. Allegory builds up faith, builds up love, and builds up hope.

The analogical sense of scripture is driven by the faith of the allegory and the love of tropology, which always provides deeper insight into the mystery of Christ. The analogical sense ought to always leave something to look for and greater fervor.

In summary, theological pedagogy is critical to this work, as it has created the necessity for spiritually exegesis. In light of Old and New Testament epistemology and

the four senses scriptural exegesis method for assimilation and praxis, the writer will derive a hybrid model for theological pedagogy for the larger project.

Kerygma

The kerygma refers to the function of the herald, that is, to proclaim, to announce, generally an event of triumph. As a noun it means either 'what is proclaim' or 'the act of proclaiming.' Thus leading us toward two modern theological considerations for kerygma, 1) Biblical theology 2) Theology in general.

From a biblical theological perspective kerygma is engaged differently depending upon the theological perspective one departs. One point of departure is from Continental theology, kerygma as being closely related to the Pauline preaching of cross and resurrection neglecting the parousia. The other point of departure argues from British theology. This understanding shifts toward a pattern of proclamation viewed in Acts 2-13, where the sermons are judged as speeches supplied by Luke to promote his overall plan and reflecting a theology of expectation as oppose to one of marvel in the here and now.

From a theological perspective in general the Christian gospel is not a conglomerate of general statements of religious truth, but announcement of salvation in and through decisive acts of God. In Jesus case, his proclamation was the initiation of the final reign of God, and calling for repentance and discipleship. In the case of the early church the proclamation of Christ death, resurrection, emanate return, inauguration of eternal life, which requires a response of faith.

Subscribing to the latter notion with respect to biblical theology, both perspectives leave the post-modern church with one persistent question: If the mythological language

of the message was shaped with eschatological expectations that were framed by 1st century Judaism, a certain understanding of the world and God's relation to it, how can it remain forceful when we no longer understand the world in those terms?

The world as it is, and the world as it should be. The writer submits that one must adopt a creative rhetorical methodology that preserves the messages of Jesus as well as the early church that in turn, creates a new mythological approach that connects with a new worldview.

CHAPTER FOUR

METHODOLOGY

Hypothesis

The hypothesis of this project proposes that, through the preaching and teaching of sermons that are laced with hip hop rhetoric; young adults between the ages of eighteen to thirty-five will increase their biblical knowledge, church attendance, and theological appetite. The hypothesis is based on personal experience with young adult learners, literature reviews, and discussions with millennial, and pedagogical patterns. These experiences assisted in determining, processing, and understanding the challenges within the context, as well as the necessity to address the issues of relevance, cultural identity, and perpetual change.

Intervention

The context that this project emerges is the St. Paul Baptist church in Baltimore, Maryland. The church is located within a community where 39% of the population is made up of persons between the ages of eighteen to thirty-five; less than 1% of the same demographic is represented in the church. Here lies the problem.

Four months were spent designing a young adult department with the intent to develop programs that would attract the post-modern generation. Meetings were held with the pastor, fellow clergy staff, and the few young adults that were members to assist with the development. After a program was created, it was presented to the church at our

annual church meeting and was received well by the congregation and subsequently voted on and adopted as a new ministry.

In the months following the meeting the first scheduled event had completed its planning stage and now ready for implementation. The program was a two-part program that included a panel discussion and a dual-sermon by a young adult female and male. The theme was "Naked Without Shame: Sexuality and the Sacred." The plans were set and ready to be presented to the pastor and clergy staff for final approval. The meeting was a disaster. The pastor was the only supporter of the program but the other minister's decided to boycott and not support the program for fear that it was to secular. It became evident that the challenge was to prove to the seasoned congregants that using secular tools/means to bring forth spiritual change is an effective way to reach post-moderns.

In fact, one of the major challenges for post-moderns is there is no engagement that aids in bridging the gap between their relationship with God and the secular world. The post-modern approach is that of a person who sees God as helping provide a healthy balance and engagement between the two. A great deal has been divulged in regards to the struggles of young adults and the Christian church and this project seeks to intervene by producing a template for assisting in bridging the gap.

Research Design

It was determined the best method was a phenomenological study using a qualitative research design. The qualitative design was determined to be the most effective means "for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups

ascribe to a social or human problem."[1] The goal is to engage an urban post-modern cohort to obtain transparent and honest feedback as it pertained to their feelings of preacher's using hip-hop language in their sermons and how that would impact their church attendance and entice their spiritual intelligence.

Moreover, there was a desire to see if there were any additional observations that could lend itself to newer trends within the post-modern community. Krueger and Casey state in *Focus Groups* that a group "encourages participants to share perceptions and point of view, without pressuring participants to vote or reach a consensus."[2]

Therefore, a focus group methodology was chose in order to obtain a better understanding of the rationale for post-modernity disconnect with standard preaching. Upon completion of sermons laced with hip-hop lyrics, a focus group discussion, in-depth interviewing, and evaluation surveys was conducted; it is envisioned that participants would be able to provide measurable data, as it relates to the project hypothesis.

We opted to utilize a focus group of the urban post-modern cohort (UPMC) between the ages of eighteen to thirty-five as a part of the research design to provide the most safe and unassuming environment to have intentional listening, and share their concerns and questions. The UPM group will provide the platform for the sermons to be engaged and experienced, through preaching and teaching, pre and post surveys, and focus group discussions.

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[1]John W. Creswell, *Qulatitave, Quantitative and Mixed Methods Approach* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publishing, 2014).

[2]Richard Krueger and Anne Casey, *Focus Groups* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2000).

The UPMC will consist of students and young professionals from urban institution of higher education, which is an affordable urban institution in Baltimore, Maryland, who have been randomly selected. It will be a group of forty to fifty males and females that will participate. Their church affiliation and/or denomination is not disclosed, however the model is designed to see if the sermon style is effective and can be adopted by clergy to impact attendance, theological appetite, and sermon digestibility.

Three sermons will be developed and preached followed by group discussions. The criterion for the UPM is to: 1) Expose them to sermons infused with hip-hop rhetoric preached and taught; 2) Engage in dialogue about the sermon effectiveness and impact; and 3) address any apprehensions about pastor's and clergy using hip-hop in sermons.

The purpose of this ministry model is to provide a different model of prophetic preaching that impacts post-modern/young adult by using the hip-hop cultural rhetoric as a means of communicating biblical insights and truth. It will also serves as an opportunity to explore the feelings and reservations that post-moderns and young adults have toward the church in general and preaching in particular.

Measurement

The data that will be gathered concerning the effective usage of hip-hop rhetoric within sermons/study and the impact it will have on the UPM's theological appetite and church attendance is organized through comparative methods. These parameters of the UPMC will be tested twice using a pre and post survey, once prior to the sermons, in-depth study of the sermon, focus group round up and personal interviews and at the conclusion of the project. The context and professional associates will distribute and collect all pre surveys in order to collect unbiased data. The participants will then engage

in a focus group discussion asking similar survey questions in order to gain group dialogue and understand a corporate response concerning the sermon and in-depth study of sermon. This discussion will investigate how the usage of hip-hop perhaps makes a positive or negative impact in their willingness to attend church. Also, a random sampling of the UPMC group will be selected to participate in an in-depth interview by the researcher. The group round up discussion and interviews will be recorded and then transcribed. The context associates will then distribute and collect the post-test surveys for final analysis of the project. The data retrieved will be review and synthesized.

CHAPTER FIVE

FIELD EXPERIENCE

Spiritual Preparation

In the weeks leading up to project implementation, the leaders participated in a seven-day fast. The fast was an attempt to spiritually align us for the project and proper execution. We invited the presence of God in the project and prayed for those who would encounter the prophetic preachment. The project execution team (PET) wanted to convey to all the participants the importance of their active role in the project's effectiveness and execution. Lastly, the PET involved joined weekly for a fifteen-minute prayer call in preparation for their active role in project implementation. It was refreshing to have a team that was willing to sacrifice their time and effort in order to preserve the integrity of the project.

Planning and Execution

One week leading up to the project implementation, I was afforded the opportunity to announce the purpose and process of the project to the cohort of participants. The PET was careful to warn me not to divulge too much information so that it would not skew or compromise future data analysis. A brief synopsis of the Doctor of Ministry process was given along with an up-to-date status of the progress. The PET communicated that at this stage the cohort becomes integral to this segment of research and experimentation.

Use of Technology

The PET utilized a group chat to coordinate schedules and space allotments to make sure we had adequate time and space for the cohort to experience the sermon and engage in-group discussion. The group-chat enabled communication between the context associates and the researcher to operate seamlessly.

Changes and Challenges

The PET and the researcher experienced challenges and changes throughout the project. The researcher struggled to gather a solid group of participants between the ages of eighteen and thirty-five because they were not represented within the congregation. As a result this forced me to be creative and reach out to local institution in order have enough participants to guarantee data collection and analysis.

The PET was then faced with some changes because the population would then require transportation for the participant's, which would create a cost that was not in budget. Therefore, the PET and the researcher decided to take the project to them instead of transporting them to the church. This challenge ultimately became prophetic in that perhaps this was a critical finding that can be explored later. This idea of not simply getting post-moderns to come in, but perhaps pastors should find ways to take the message to them.

Unbeknownst to me, he was forced to become mobile, as hip-hop has made the same transition that the church needs to make, that is, it is a mobile movement.

Effectively Using Hip-Hop Rhetoric For Prophetic Preaching To Post-Modernity Qualitative Pre-Test Surveys and Data Collection Methodology

On Thursday, January 30, 2014 and February 4, 2014, it was announced to the cohort that the project implementation stage of the doctoral work would commence on February 6, 2014. The UPMC was made aware of their important role in this process and surveys would be distributed to all participating participants. A special segment on February 5, 2014 was designated to explain the title of the project, the problem, and how the problem would be addressed. The PET was careful not to state the non-directional hypothesis of the project in order to maintain data integrity. The context associates were presented and they distributed the pre-test surveys. Time was allotted to complete the surveys and the overall response was positive. Context associates collected the pre-test surveys once the allotted time had ended.

Three Biblical Foundation Sermons

The three sermons were constructed using two formatting methodology: Poetic and Trivocal. The sermons were not written or delivered as 1 continuous series, they each possessed their own usage of hip-hop rhetoric and personality.

The first sermon was titled *Please Don't Kill My Vibe (Kendrick Lamar)*

Matthew 15:21-26

After the release and success of Kendrick Lamar's first album entitled Section 80. Lamar signed a major record deal with Interscope and Aftermath records. In 2012 Kendrick Lamar released his first record on the major label and his second album in total which debut No. 2 on the Billboard charts upon its release. This album called Good Kidd, MADD city was considered by most rap critics one of the best albums of the year.

They considered it as such, not because it had a major producer like Dr. Dre, or because he possessed witty lyrics, and poignant punch lines, not because he was signed to a major record label but they considered it a top album because he remained true to himself in light of being elevated to new heights.

Kendrick Lamar made a promise that he would maintain his underground style and would never sellout to what radio stations wanted to play. In other words he decided that he would make music that was true to his character and true to his story. And his album did exactly that!

His album is a short story that talks about a teenager who is struggling through his adolescence in a city called Compton California. Compton California is like a Baltimore on the west cost. It has rough neighborhoods, corrupt police, drugs on street corners, crooked policeman, sold out politicians, churches with no power, more liquor stores than grocery stores, more Asian owned businesses than Black own businesses, schools with no books, underpaid teachers, gang violence it is indeed a MADD city. And Kendrick becomes the urban informer as to how a young people can move from rebellion to redemption.

Kendrick Lamar documents for us the story about a good kid coming out of a bad situation. Can I park here and parenthetically suggest to you that Christianity is not about your suits, fancy clothes, by its about acknowledging your current situation is better because of the circumstances of the cross and because he was crucified, I can Celebrate my coming out.

Kendrick Lamar is no different than the woman in our text, she has a good kid who's in a bad situation. She remains true to herself and summons Jesus' to remain true to his nature as well. Tell somebody next to you, "Just keep it 100."

1. 1.Stick to the script (Hip-hop reference)
2. There are circumstance that will cause you to reconsider your commitments to Christ. There are situations that will summons you to sabotage the sacrifices you've made for your sanity. There are predicaments that will push you to ponder if you want to continue to pursue the promises of God
3. Stay saved during the struggle - She does not allow the disciples' response or Jesus' initial attitude to shift her perspective of what can happen.
4. Saving is an attribute of the Savior - Jesus' nature wouldn't allow him to continue ignoring the sincere plea of a person in need.

The second sermon was titled *Nothing Was The Same (Drake) Appendix B.* The Third sermon was titled *Moses Rap Appendix B.*

Qualitative Post-Surveys and Data Collection Methodology

At the conclusion of the second and final in-depth sermon study, participants received the qualitative post-surveys from context associates. It was noticed by the context associates, that the participants focused more intently on the post-surveys.

Focus Group Round Up Questionnaires

In order to triangulate research data and bring closure to the project implementation stage, the focus group participated in an in-depth investigation of the sermon, which was led by the researcher. The group was asked how they to tell their thoughts about preachers using *Hip-hop* in their sermons.

Analysis and Outcome of Data

Pre and Post Surveys

Forty-four participants completed the pre-survey and forty-three completed the post survey. The age range was eighteen to forty.

Q1. How do you feel about preacher's using hip-hop in their sermons?

- Pre – 84% had a positive feeling about preacher's using hip hop and 9% had a negative perspective. 7% were indifferent
- Post – 100% felt positively about preacher's using hip-hop.
- A 16% improvement

Q2. Do you feel like hip-hop will help you understand biblical stories better?

- Pre – 64% agreed that it would help them understand biblical stories better and 21% did not. 16 % were indifferent.
- Post – 93% agreed that it would help them better understand biblical stories and 7% disagreed.
- A 29% improvement

Q3. Do you think that the use of hip hop will help people your age pay more attention to the sermonic presentation?

- Pre – 95 % thought that hip-hop would help keep their generation's attention and 5% did not.
- Post – 100% felt that by using hip-hop people there age would pay more attention to the sermonic presentation
- 5% Improvement

Q4. Do you believe it is important for preachers to use current hip-hop language/rhetoric to convey biblical truths to this generation?

- Pre - 57% believed that using hip-hop is important to convey biblical truths and 34% did not. 9% were indifferent.

- Post – 100% believed that using hip-hop is important to convey biblical truths.

- 43% Improvement

Q5. Do you think that effective use of hip-hop rhetoric in sermons can help increase the church attendance of people your age?

- Pre – 91% of the participants believed that church attendance would increase and 7% did not. 2% were indifferent.

- Post – 91% of the participants believed that church attendance would increase and 9 % were indifferent.

- 7% improvement in favor of indifferent

Outcome of Pre and Post Test Data

The overall outcome of the pre and posttest surveys revealed that the majority of participants improved their perspectives and perceptions about preachers using hip-hop in their sermons. The results of question 1 revealed that most of the participants initially felt positive about preachers using hip-hop in sermons. Most participants made comments about how it can help bridge the generational divide. In fact, participant #36 stated, *I believe it assists with forging a connection with the church and today's youth.*

The results of question 2 revealed participants had a more optimistic perspective of hip-hop's ability to help understand biblical stories in the post-test. It was stated by participant #4 that, *when first hearing the bible verse I didn't understand but after being compared to Kendrick Lamar & already understanding his message I could understand the bible verse more.*

The result of question 3 revealed the participants were very clear that hip-hop is most appealing to their generation and it would hold their attention span better than a traditional sermon with no hip-hop references from the pre-test. Participant 4 stated that, *that's what people of my age group are into so it'll be more appealing to them in hip-hop form.*

The results of question 4 revealed that there was some major improvement from participants who did not initially believe using hip-hop rhetoric would assist in biblical and theological pedagogy. The participants grew tremendously in their appreciation for the power of using a secular tool to convey biblical truths. Participant 8 said, *Yes, we understand hip-hop more so it makes us understand biblical truths more.*

The results of question 5 revealed that the majority of the cohort still believed that church attendance amongst their generation would increase however, we saw a 7% increase in the amount of undecided participants. Further investigation revealed that post-modernist believed that church attendance is more than just a relevant sermon. Participant 7 suggested that, *if attendance only is the goal it takes more than just hip-hop or even good "regular" sermons to maintain church attendance. It takes discipleship.*

Focus Group Round Up and Questionnaires and Outcome

Twenty people in total participated in the Focus Group. The age range of the focus group was between eighteen and thirty-five.

Q1 Have your perspectives changed after being exposed to preachers using hip-hop?

- All twenty were adamant about their change explaining how effective it was to have something so relatable. Moreover, it was made evident that the participants were aware that it was generationally specific material.

Q2 Did hip-hop help you understand the biblical story better?

- All participants agreed that by using hip-hop the biblical story became clearer and more palatable for application.

Q3 In your opinion was using hip-hop more effective at conveying biblical truth than traditional sermons you've heard?

- 18 out of 20 (90%) agreed that using hip-hop conveyed the message well. However, there was a consensus that the model might be a deterrent for the older members.

Q4 Could someone who is not apart of the hip-hop culture, implement this projects method?

- 15 out of 20 (75%) agreed that anybody can use hip-hop if they really took the time to analyze the music and culture.

- The remainder of the group argued that using hip-hop seems more authentic when it comes from someone who is apart of the culture.

CHAPTER SIX

REFLECTION, SUMMARY, AND CONCLUSION,

Overall Summary

There was an overall positive encounter during the field experience for this project. The field experience challenged me intellectually, spiritually, and socially. It provided an opportunity to develop a relationship with a generation that has a rich well of experiences that has helped to inform his theology and hermeneutic. Having engaged a group of forty-four young adults who have the future at their fingertips has altered my perception of their perspective of the universal church, the Black religious experience in America and, a fresh interpretation of urban life.

Theological Reflections on Field Experience

Theological trajectory grew exponentially as I was continuously engaged the cohort and the findings that emerged in conversation. Some of which he was familiar but the unfamiliar is what intrigued him the most. The unfamiliar has always been intriguing for exploration of the researcher, which extends back to his spiritual autobiography pillars. One of the most prolific finding was the fact that urban post moderns have new form of pedagogy, which informs and shapes their way of thinking and life and hip-hop culture is the culprit of such pedagogy.

Intellectually the field experience challenged the writer by forcing him to critically assess who he was dealing with, as it relates to, post modernity. As a twenty-

nine year old Black male, I assumed that I was the chief scholar of urban life until I encountered the project participants. I discovered that there is a new form of pedagogy; an intellectual stimulation that is cultivated by contempt. That is, the smartest person is not the individual who is educated enough to get out the public assistance system, it is in fact, the one who learns to manipulate the system to their advantage as long as possible. This proved to be a new form of pedagogy, which challenged me to further understand how hip-hop as a genre and culture has contributed to this apathetic attitude, while simultaneously becoming the instrument of it's deconstruction.

Spiritually, the field experience challenged me to develop a consistent devotional life. The one pillar that stood out amidst the entire experience is that post-moderns lack consistency and they have very few consistent variables that help them remain focus. It helped me realize that honesty and consistency are the two highly worship ideals among their generation. The church has been consistently inconsistent to many of them and as a result, some of them have developed a lack of trust with the church. Therefore, it became refreshing to be able to provide a liberating experience and offer a new experience. I exponentially as I became more devotional and prayerful throughout the project.

Suggestions of Implementation

Implementation was not the most difficult task, however, if I were to offer any suggestions it would be in three areas: 1) Accompany the sermons and Bible study with other aspects of Hip-hop; 2) Utilize an array of generations for presentation; and 3) Use multiple venues and not just one.

Lessons Learned

This experience has provided mewith a few lessons as it pertains to the field experience and overall project. One of which is having the ability to balance personal and professional life. There were times when ministry or professional obligations did not coincide and scheduling conflicts delayed aspects of the project. Time management became a critical element that had to employ in order to give the project quality attention and attentiveness.

The project also helped acknowledge that diversity does not have to breed division. There were times when I had to acknowledge that living in an urban setting subject you to the same elements regardless of household income. The experiences that urban life affords people finds a way of galvanizing a common understanding and a common language and hip-hop has cornered and capitalized on it.

The field experience also assisted in learning the value of teamwork. It is a huge asset to research when you not only have a capable team but also a competent team. Having persons who challenged me on the trends and findings in the data proved to be a tremendous blessing during data analysis.

Recommendations

The researcher has one recommendation for future researcher and that is to do the project with individuals who are current stakeholders of your congregations because that's the generation who needs to increase their understanding for change to happen. The post-moderns get it; it is the baby-boomers who are holding the church hostage from collaboration and freedom of creativity.

APPENDIX A

SURVEYS

Please write a complete response to each question.

Qualitative Survey: Pre-Test

1. How do you feel about preacher's using hip-hop in their sermons?

2. Do you feel like hip-hop will help you understand biblical stories better?

3. Do you think that the use of hip hop will help people your age pay more attention to the sermonic presentation?

4. Do you believe its important for preacher's to use current hip-hop language/rhetoric to convey biblical truths to this generation?

5. Do you think that effective use of hip-hop rhetoric in sermons can help increase the church attendance of people your age?

Please write a complete response to each question.

Qualitative Survey: Post-Test

1. After hearing the sermons, have your feelings about preacher's using hip-hop in sermons changed?

2. Do you feel like hip-hop can help you understand biblical stories better?

3. Do you think by using hip-hop that it helped keep your attention?

4. Do you believe hip-hop can help convey biblical truths to your generation?

5. Do you think church attendance would increase amongst your generation if hip-hop rhetoric were a part of the sermon?

APPENDIX B

SAMPLE SERMONS

Sermon 2

Nothing Was The Same

1Samuel 17:33-37

On September 24 rapper Aubrey Drake Graham released his 3rd album entitled "Nothing was the Same". This album after a few listens is clearly a reflection on his life after the success that his past two albums have brought him. This album is preceded by two albums that were game changing works the first being "Thank me later", which helps the listener to understand that their talents or greatness may not be recognized until after you have attained a certain status. This album was followed by "Take Care" which helped us understand the importance of family. Drake unpacks for us his stories about relationships with women, friends, and foes. He creates melodic tracks with harsh lyrics and witty punch lines packed with reflection and perspective. All of which helps to set us up for a moment that will change into a movement. These albums teach us a few things:

- sometimes we need to take the time to think back and reflect on how far we've come!
- started from the bottom now you're here(Drake)
- you had a turning point
- you don't look like what you've been through
- truth is you had to GRIND like that to shine like this (Meek Mill Intro)

Drake's albums serve as trailers for a movie that played out a long time ago with a guy named David. After helping a king with nightmares he went back home and told the King to "Thank Me Later. Later he would return to bring food to his brothers fighting in

the kings army, who's enemy he had to "Take Care" of himself. Finally arriving at our point in the story where the moment has the ability to become a movement where David has a "Nothing was the Same" moment after killing a giant.

The first of three reasons why nothing was the same is because David was anointed.

1. Anointed - after the spirit of The Lord has left Saul, Samuel is tasked with anointing a new king. Samuel is sent to Bethlehem to talk to Jesse who has 8 sons. Samuel invites the father and his sons to come to witness a sacrifice he begins to take note of the sons in order to size up which one would be best suitable to be anointed King of Israel. Samuel goes through seven of Jesse sons and he gets to the last son who is the youngest of them all with a puny stature and almost looks wimpish, but this is young David who Samuel is instructed to anoint as King.

Some of us are Kings disguised as a human others are humans disguised as Kings. WHICH ONE ARE YOU?

2. Appointed -Saul is now in a fix because he doesn't have anyone to step up and face this Phillistine Giant and here comes David who is still working as a shepherd and a delivery

3. Anchored - how do you handle when people insist on not seeing you for what you're worth. People who use you for what they want and then dismisses you? Can I help you

understand that the only giants that David is facing in this story is himself. Saul's giant was his own insecurities.

Speak life over your insecurities

Nothing was the same

Friendships will not be the same

Finances will not be the same

Family will not be the same

Health will not be the same

Attitude will not be the same

Tweets will not be the same

Instagram post will not be the same

Vines will not be the same

My life will never be the same because of Jesus!

Sermon 3

Moses Rap

Text: Exodus

They use to pray for times like this, a time so bliss

But they had whips on backs and chains on wrists

In a matter of time they spent in a war with sin

Imagine the slaves asking why won't God save them?

Moses' mother was bold, and his sister was too, It was time to give up her son so he could live brand new

And Pharoah just couldn't see with a clear eye view, so his daughter adopted Moses and his family approved.

But it's all a tease, Pretty please before these slaves bleed please set them free. Never let satin get in between what God has promised, I'm a little religious but broken-hearted because satin has run a-muck and my faith has slowly departed, but still praise him regardless, when prayer becomes the hardest, no sorrow for you to wallow when trouble becomes your problem, failure is not an option, blessings are always following, They'd do anything for a blessing and Moses came and they got it.

He did it without violence, He did it with desire, People came to admire

He spoke about the King of Kings still Pharoah wouldn't retire.

So first he gave the king a choice, at first he came in peace,

Then God sent the first plague but Pharaoh wouldn't believe.

Pharoah set them free, set them free so this war can stop

Worst is bound to happen and the tenth could make your mourn a lot

If you're not talking about my God then this is a warning shot, Blessings come in silence and Pharoah you tend to talk a lot

Not another word, not another word, you played deaf so now you'll get what you deserve

You should've listened

Hold up wait a minute, the story isn't finished, When God said they would be free man ya'll thought he was kidding?

Blessings come to those who wait and Moses had the vision, Troubled men, please them free, Moses was asking, but he wouldn't listen

When they first got to the red sea the Israelites lost hope, and Pharoah thought he won the war and God was just a joke

He trapped them at the edge of the sea and death was oh so close, cuz Egyptians wanted them dead and Moses had no boat

So Moses began to pray to God no fear of being Killed, He understood that prayer works and his help was in the hills

He knelt down, he knelt down, he knelt down for some hope and God showed them who's almighty and that Pharoah's just a joke

Moses acted in a hurry, he parted the red sea, then waters started flowing, and his people started to flee, when Egyptians made their way, waves crashed like falling trees

remember when you're feeling trapped remember God is all you need

So now we're dancing in that new land, that place that God has promised

We're dancing with the King of Kings knowing failure's not an option

We're praising God not whyling, cuz my savior's always watching, We're dancing with the King of Kings and his blessings never decline

So Im like young people Wazup, Young people wazup, If you aint following Jesus Christ I need you to step up.

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